

THE HOMES OF TENNYSON



ALDWORTH

Tennyson loved the autumn on Blackdown, so I was the more pleased to make this drawing of his stately Sussex home when the Virginia creeper was in its full autumn glory.

The house was not so richly covered with creepers when I was first invited to stay there in the autumn of 1876, but the great view of the Weald of Sussex remains the same as ever it was—"Green Sussex fading into blue."

THE HOMES OF TENNYSON

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WITH
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NOTE

THIS sketch of the Homes of Tennyson has been written from a personal, rather than a biographical, standpoint, and the thanks of the author are due to the friends and relatives of the Poet for much valuable information concerning his life.

Among the books of reference consulted especial mention should be made of the *Memoir of Alfred Tennyson*, by his son. This book, encyclopædic in its completeness, and an authority beyond dispute in matters of fact concerning the Poet's life, has been freely quoted in the present work.

A. P.

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PART I

FARRINGFORD

CHAPTER I

FARRINGFORD

IT was the month of February. I stood on the Afton Down, Isle of Wight, facing a north-west wind which drove before it a storm of hail and rain. There was no shelter, I was lightly clad, and the wind cut to the bone. The discomforts of the situation, however, troubled me little. I was only haunted by a dread lest the elements were conspiring to defeat the purpose which had brought me to the place, and which required above all things a clear sky and a long view.

Swish came the rain, almost horizontally, followed by a bayonet charge of hail. That presently gave place again to rain, followed by a stillness, as if the storm had paused to consider itself, broken only by the moan of the wind and the far-off drum-beat of the surf upon the shore.

For many minutes I stood, straining my eyes to pierce the grey gloom of the driving clouds, drenched and shivering but pinning my faith to the sharp northerly "bite" of the wind. It seemed hopeless, and I had just decided to give in when I noticed that the rain was becoming finer and softer and that gradually the mists covering land and sea were beginning to rise. A streak of blue now appeared, rapidly widening; the clouds lifted, and, caught up by the wind, were hurtled eastwards in confusion: the sun broke out behind me gloriously, and the whole world was changed.

It was Sunday morning, and as if in thanksgiving the church bells now rang out softly in the distance. A Sabbath rest and peace settled down upon the land, and as the view cleared to the horizon line my spirit found comfort. At the same time I began to be oppressed by a sense of awe and diffidence I had not felt before.

I was here to describe the country and the island home of Tennyson, the land he knew and lived in for forty years; and which by the greatness of his personality and the work he did there he has made his own more surely than if he had bought every foot of it with gold.

It was a heavy task—almost impossible of fulfil-

ment in any adequate sense, but one that was a privilege even to attempt. Below the Afton Down on the right stretched the Valley of the Yar with the river—a silver thread—winding northward to the little port of Yarmouth with its old church tower. Beyond, the Solent, bounded by the low green shore-line and faintly outlined hills of England. Southwards, far as eye could see, the Channel, to the shores of which the Poet came in all weathers and at all seasons to listen to the ceaseless pulsing of the sea.

Westwards, at the foot of the Down, was the village of Freshwater Gate, or Bay as it is now termed, and beyond, grand and still in the sunshine, stretching to the edge of the sky-line, High Down—Tennyson's own Down—dominated at its highest point by the great stone cross erected as a monument to his memory by English and Americans—a token of the love and gratitude for all that his work had been to them.

The choice of the memorial was made by his son, the present Lord Tennyson—a happy choice. Where the Cross is now placed had been a Beacon for Mariners to enable them to avoid the dangers of the Needles. This monument, therefore, as long as stone may last, stands a safeguard and

central point for sailors to steer by when coming from the west.

On the right of Tennyson's Down the scenery changes from bare hillside to meadow and grove and ploughed field, with here and there a grey stone house or weather-beaten farm or cottage. I grew keenly watchful now. By the side of the Down, among the trees, lay Farringford—if one could only see it. But this was impossible. No wild bird's nest was ever better hidden than Tennyson's.

This vain search bred a restlessness in me. The scenery with all its beauty and variety—gentle valley and hardy down, smoothly flowing river and mighty rolling sea—ceased to bring contentment.

I had intended to spend a long morning on the far-away downs, or by the shore. Now, as if drawn by the personal mesmerism of a spirit living still in the old home, though long departed from the outer world, I left the Afton Down, turned my back upon the distant views, and went westwards towards Farringford itself.

The church bells had ceased, and there was a great stillness, deepened, rather than broken, by the constant movement of the wind, which was now steadily rising.



TENNYSON'S DOWN

I made this drawing of the "High Down" ("The Noble Down") in May, from the edge of the copse on Maiden's Croft. On its highest part stands the monument placed by English and Americans on the site of the old Beacon, and from there the Down slopes away for a mile and a half to the Needles. To the Beacon and back was a favourite walk of the Poet's. The copse was full of bluebells, and some of them had escaped into the field.

In a little while I was at Freshwater Gate, in full view of the beautiful sweep of the Bay, passing here an old inn, there a trim hotel with a cluster of mushroom villas and cottages behind it "pricking a cockney ear," and which made me sigh as I thought of the place as he knew it first, when meadow and down stretched unbroken to the edge of the beach.

Through a lane now, and up a footpath and over a stile. I drew a deep breath and paused. Villas with apartments to let, hotels and the like, were out of sight and mind. Grass was under my feet, stretching above and onward for miles—I was standing on Tennyson's Down. In a few moments I was on the edge of the Down looking at the waves beneath, and shading my eyes from the dazzling white of the cliffs which here, under the gleam of the sun and washed by a snarling sea, range westward, white, fearsome, and beautiful as a row of tiger's teeth.

A few yards farther on was a niche in the cliff-side, which the present Lord Tennyson, the evening before, had pointed out to me as a favourite resting-place of his father's, and one where he would often sit, sheltered from the cold winds, gazing seaward. As I looked upon it and the

steps that led there, I seemed to see as in a dream the tall figure in the black wide-awake hat and the short blue cape with velvet collar, the face with its noble refinement and power, and the dark, melancholy eyes looking far into the distance over the sea, and I heard from below distinctly, under the stress of the wind, what he had heard here and described in one of his greatest poems—

The scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave.

Presently I wandered on over the Down, feeling that every step now was on holy ground, and reaching at length the summit, stood before the Monument and read the inscription there.

In memory of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, this Cross is raised, a Beacon to Sailors, by the People of Freshwater, and other friends in England and America.

By this time the sky had darkened again—another storm was brewing and the air was damp and chill. With a shiver I hurried down the northern slope of the Down toward Farringford, intent on gaining shelter before the rain came on. But the impulse only lasted a few minutes. Near the foot of the Down, just above the lane leading up, between fields, to the garden, I came to a series

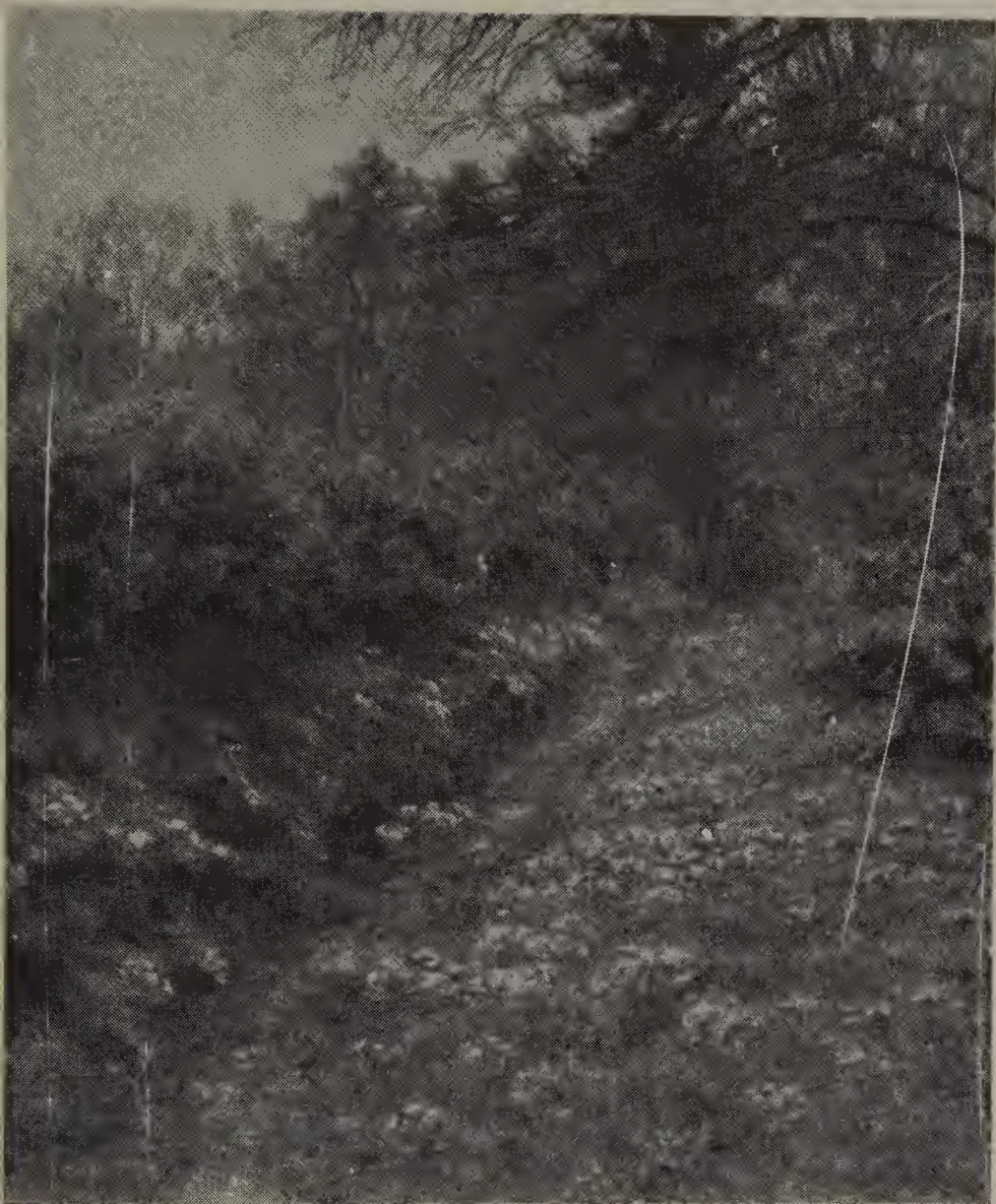
of uneven steps cut out of the turf and chalk, where the ascent was steep. It was a place of gentle memory, for these steps had been cut with Tennyson's own hand fifty years ago for his wife, so that without undue exertion she might share his favourite walk over the Down. Not far from the steps there is a large hollow which might once have been the beginning of a small quarry. Here when boys Hallam, Lord Tennyson, and his brother Lionel often came with their father to play football : and earlier as children, in joyous disregard of clothes, to roll gaily down the steep bank side.

Turning now into the lane I approached Farringford, still invisible among its trees ; but when half-way there I stepped into a field upon the right. This field slopes from the grounds of Farringford to the foot of the hill, and from it is obtained the view of the Down seen in Mrs. Allingham's drawing. A plain ordinary field this, to those who do not know its history : a sacred spot to all the Poet's friends. It is called Maiden's Croft—christened by the monks of the Abbey of Lyra, Normandy, who owned the place until they parted with it in the fourteenth century to one Walter de Ferringford.

Being a very quiet and sheltered spot far from habitable places, facing the lonely Down, and sheltered by the trees to north and east, it was a favourite haunt of Tennyson's, who built at the end of it a summer-house, on which, being a great worker with his hands, he painted the forms of dragons and strange monsters, and when all was complete came often there with his family, or alone to work.

At this summer-house I stood for a long time thinking of all that had been accomplished in it. "Enoch Arden" was written here and "The Holy Grail," and much which has never reached the world.

It was a characteristic of Tennyson's as an artist to be supremely self-critical. A man of the keenest susceptibility to all that was beautiful in the commonest lives; with sympathy so deep, and power of expression so wide and various, that he could transmute the story of the humblest everyday incidents into poetry as exquisite as his chronicles of the deeds of heroes and of kings, yet so determined was he to give to the world only of his best, that he never published even a sonnet or a fragment without weighing it in the balance of a judgment so severe and refined that what we



THE PRIMROSE PATH OF DALLIANCE,
FARRINGFORD

This is the family name for the lovely path through the copse on the Maiden's Croft. It is approached from the House by the little bridge that spans the lane through Farringford. Tennyson loved the flowers and could not bear to see any plucked, even when growing in profusion in the fields.

This drawing belongs to old friends of his who have always known the path well.

know of as written by him, great as it is, is but a fraction of all that he composed.

This morning, as I stood before the summer-house where he had thought and worked so long, the feeling came to me irresistibly that a mine of wealth had been created there, known to the rustling leaves and whispering grass but which the world would never know: and now the summer-house is empty and bare, the door closed and its spirit gone.

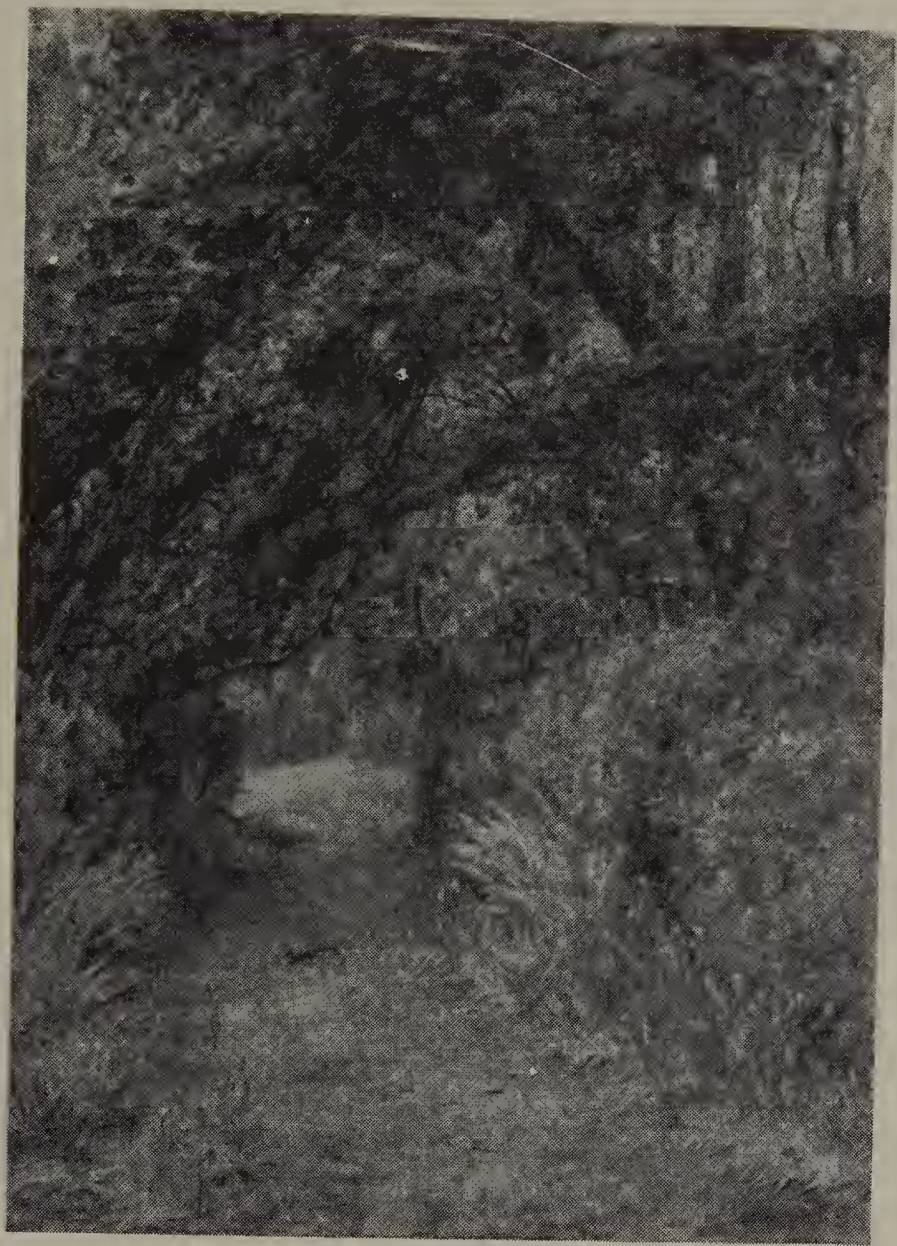
The closing of the place was a necessity, and should be significant to those who wonder why the Poet and his family have shunned the prying of so-called "admirers" from the outside world.

The arbour was preserved exactly as Tennyson had built and decorated it, until one day upon the return of the family from an absence of some months it was found that tourists, like veritable "body-snatchers," had torn away every vestige of the paintings, leaving the place a wreck—an empty shell. Now, the bare walls and the beams, which even vandalism could not steal, are all that remain; rank grass grows about the bolted door, and the place is as deserted as a last year's nest.

Leaving the summer-house I turned to the right and passed through a wicket gate, leading to

a path crossing a rustic bridge that spans a deep cutting, where, many feet below, runs another path, a public right of way. This cutting is of interest. It was a most ingenious device of Tennyson's to secure himself the privacy he craved for without contravening the law of the land. The right of way extends through this part of his estate for some little distance, and as Tennyson became famous the ubiquitous tourist began to prowl here to catch the Poet on his way to Maiden's Croft or the Down; nor was there any escape, for the public path ran directly across all the convenient avenues to the sea. But the law, though it forbids the stoppage of a right of way, has nothing to say as to its altitude. So one day Tennyson set to work, and by lowering the level of the lane where it crossed the path he chose for his daily walks, neatly and entirely outwitted his enemies. After this, though a devotee by waiting patiently for many hours might have been rewarded by the glimpse of a tall figure striding rapidly across the bridge overhead, the Poet himself was out of reach of the impertinent intrusiveness of a stranger's greeting and questionings; and went his way in solitude and peace.

The path wound here among trees at the foot



THE GLADE, FARRINGFORD

The Glade is the name given to a narrow woodland path leading down from the little postern in the lane to the Upper Lawn, a green open scoop in the woods, whence one catches the first glimpse of the House. Here the tall trees have blown over, and have been allowed to stay just where they caught in each other's branches. Heart's-tongue and filix-mas ferns and bluebells line the path on either side. The utter quietude of the place, only broken now and again by the squeak of a squirrel, brought to my mind as I painted there Keats's beautiful opening lines in *Hyperion*—

No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.

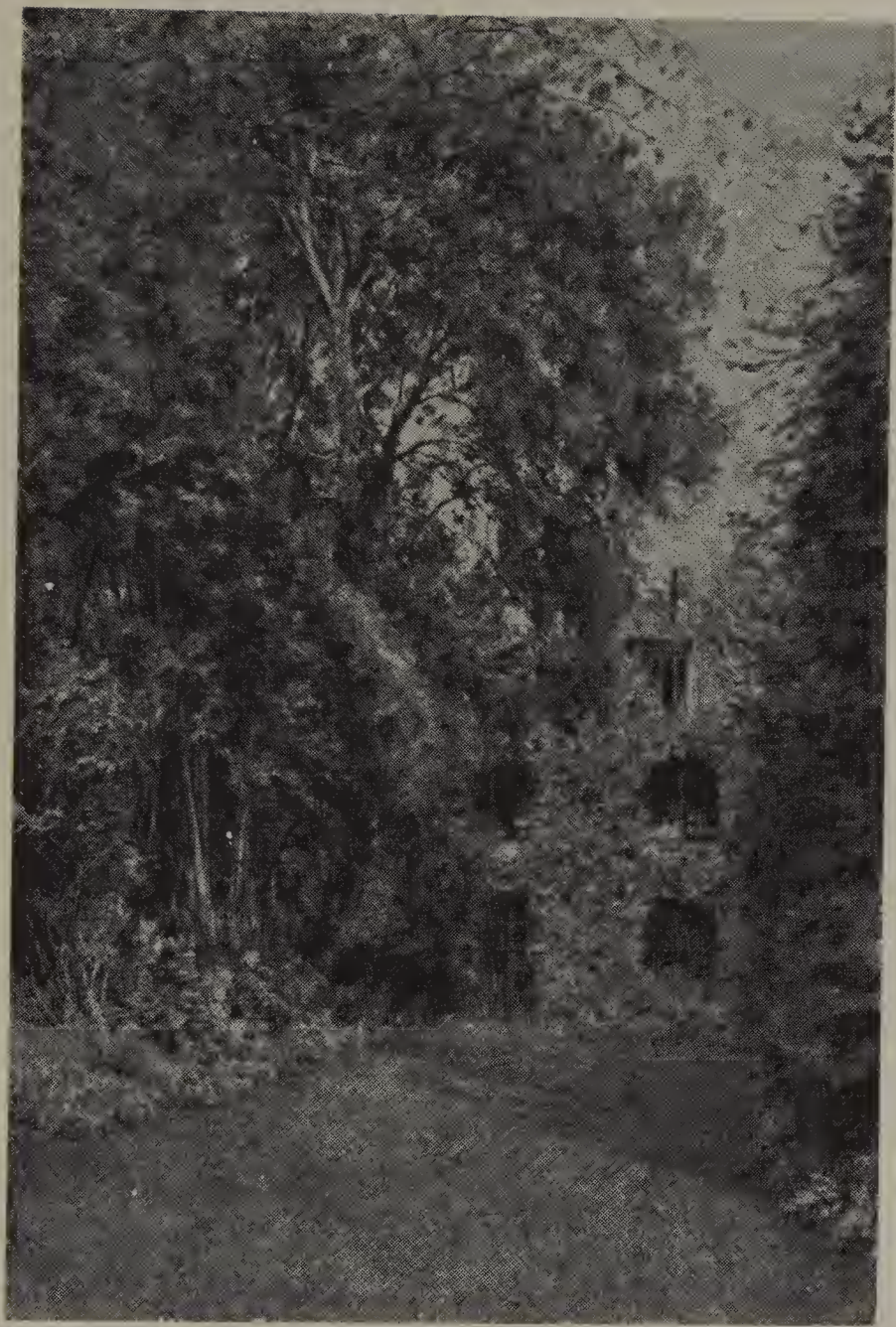
of which daffodils, snowdrops, and violets grew in profusion.

The wood was soundless, and an atmosphere of such perfect solitariness brooded over it that I might have been in the midst of some primeval forest in an untrodden land. A rustle, and pitter-patter on bark. A squirrel ran noisily down a tree-trunk within a few yards of me, and with a pert jerk of his head trotted down the path with an air of supreme indifference. He disappeared round the corner, and I found him a moment later nibbling at something in the grass in an open lawn beyond.

Yet quiet as the whole place seemed, it was not unkempt or wild. The paths were well laid, and the grass on this lawn was soft and fine, showing no rankness. It was the spot known as the Upper Lawn—a favourite resort of Tennyson's, and where he would sit in the afternoons with his family and friends, sometimes reading to them from his poems.

Half lawn, half woodland glade, the silence here seemed deeper than elsewhere, though the growth of trees around it was not too thick to keep out the sun, which, the storm being over, now shot bright rays down upon the grass, just moved by

the wind which was here a zephyr breeze, though upon the Down almost a hurricane. A tender and most restful spot where I was tempted to linger and recall many a reminiscence given so graphically in the *Memoir* written by his son, until, happening to turn to the right, I saw down an avenue of greensward the house itself—at last. The sight came almost with a shock, so far from any human life to-day had seemed the place on which I stood. Yet at a second glance upon the old walls covered with magnolia and ivy, encircled with trees as in the drawing, the thought came that nothing could be more appropriate or characteristic than that within this stately solitude should be embowered a great poet's hearth and home.



GLIMPSE OF FARRINGFORD FROM THE
UPPER LAWN

I made this drawing in the spring of 1890, and as the Poet liked it, I asked him to keep it. The grass on the path, then getting thin from the close, high growth of the trees, has now quite gone.

The face of the House, with the great magnolia and roses twining round the windows of Tennyson's own special rooms, remains almost the same.

FARRINGFORD

(continued)

CHAPTER II

FARRINGFORD (*continued*)

THE greater part of Farringford House was built in the middle of the eighteenth century. Though the land attached to it, Priors Manor, became the property of a "de Ferringford" in the fourteenth century, there is nothing to prove that any part of the present house was built then. In Mrs. Allingham's drawing is seen what she suggestively calls "the living side" of the house. From the door by the conservatory Tennyson came out for his walks, and through that door the friends of the family went in. The front entrance, which is round to the right, as the house is viewed in the drawing, was used mostly by strangers or acquaintances and those arriving in carriages. From the lawn on the "living side" the paths lead to wood and upper lawn, along which the Poet strode when off to the Down and the

sea—or to the lane leading to Freshwater Gate.

Approaching the house—the older portion lies behind the great cedar on the right. The window peeping through the upper boughs of the cedar belongs to the Poet's famous attic room, where "Maud" was written; above this, just visible, is the roof where he took his friends to gaze at the stars. The window below, on the first floor, was his bedroom—and from thence he could pass by a private way to his library—used as a study in later years. The windows of the library are to the left in the drawing on the upper floor, near the round tower. In the tower is a winding staircase leading to the library, and from the head of the tower a passage takes one to the other portion of the house up to the attic room.

The library and the room beneath it, the "music-room," to the left of the conservatory, were built by Tennyson himself some years after he came to live here.

A quaint and picturesque country house is Farringford. The least pretentious of mansions, yet with a peculiar dignity of its own, arising partly from its associations, and partly from the perfect stillness which broods there. The same atmosphere

of solitude rests on this lawn among its ilex, yew, and cedar, as in the farther glades of the wood.

Mrs. Allingham tells how the rabbits in her sight over-ran the lawn as we see them in the drawing, and so it was with wilder creatures. No traps or guns were allowed at Farringford. Even moles and vermin were spared until their depredations became too serious to be endured. A great tenderness for all life was a marked characteristic of the Poet's. He even disliked to cut flowers, and would never destroy anything that grew if it could possibly be avoided. His labours were directed to encouraging more growth. The planting of trees was a favourite occupation of his in leisure hours, and is one of the reasons why Farringford is now invisible beyond the borders of its lawns. A print of the house in the eighteenth century shown me by Lord Tennyson would indicate that in those days it was visible for a considerable distance.

The atmosphere of seclusion which Tennyson's love for nature wove round his home must not, however, be mistaken, as it has been, for one of unsociable isolation, or as indicating a determination to wrap up his personality in an impenetrable cloak of reserve and exclusiveness.

Only to one class of person was Tennyson unapproachable—the tourist.

This person, who proved himself to be an inquisitive, self-instituted, and unlicensed inquirer and tormentor, was abhorrent to the Poet. A proud and sensitive man, he had worked for his work's sake, and wrought his masterpieces to satisfy his own ideals and serve mankind; giving of his best without seeking for more return than the recognition he felt his work deserved—small indeed compared to its real worth. Why should he be badgered and annoyed by the effects of a notoriety he had never coveted, and suffer his private life to be pried into and stared at by vulgar eyes, or patiently allow sight-seers to “flatten their noses against his drawing-room window panes?” He would not—he did not—and as a consequence the stranger without credentials found Farringford as inaccessible as the seekers of the Sleeping Beauty found the palace—

A wall of green
Close matted, bur and brake and briar,
And glimpsing over these, just seen,
High up, the topmost palace spire.

It was not so, however, with a visitor who could make good the slenderest of claims to the Poet's notice, and approach him with any purpose

other than mere curiosity. To such a visitor, even the humblest, he was always kind and hospitable.

I left the upper lawn—"the King's Parlour," as Mrs. Brotherton, the Poet's old friend, calls it in her poem—

Lovely and lofty, shut from view
And wall'd with green and roof'd with blue,

the squirrel still gambolling with impertinent non-chalance in the open—and bent my steps down the glade toward the conservatory. Here I met the present Lord Tennyson, who kindly made himself my guide through the house.

That Lord Tennyson was the best and most inspiring of companions for such a pilgrimage goes without saying. "A great broad-shouldered, genial Englishman," he speaks "few words but pithy" and possesses a personality at once strong, kindly, and winning. In his presence one is constantly reminded of the conclusion to Mr. F. T. Palgrave's charming "personal recollections" of the Poet—published in the *Memoir* of Tennyson by his son.

"The one impression," Mr. Palgrave writes, "which above all others those three-and-forty years of unswerving friendship have left with me as the

dominant note of Alfred Tennyson is lovable-ness." A heritage which has already been handed down two generations.

Lord Tennyson first showed me the "music-room," or "ball-room," on the ground floor—used as play-room when he was a boy, and where in later years his father often played games with him for exercise when unable to go out. A place full of happy reminiscences. Here in the old times, with his two boys, the Poet played battledore and shuttlecock ; built them mighty castles of bricks ; read and told them stories, and repeated many a stirring ballad.

A joyous place was their home for the lads of the house. Tennyson was not only a devoted father but a true child-lover. It is told by his son¹ that when the Poet was a young man his small brothers and sisters would "sit upon his knee and cling about his feet while he told them stories of his own invention." When he was old his grandchildren loved to be with him, and Mr. William Allingham gives a delightful picture of the Poet in 1880, when he was seventy-one, "sitting in a pony carriage with his little grandson Alfred, aged three, who had on the great Alfred's black

¹ *Memoir*, vol. i. p. 369.

sombrero ; the child's straw hat, with a blue ribbon, was stuck on the top of the Poet's large head, and so they drove gravely along."

On one of his last walks, when past eighty, Tennyson took kindly notice of the village school-children.

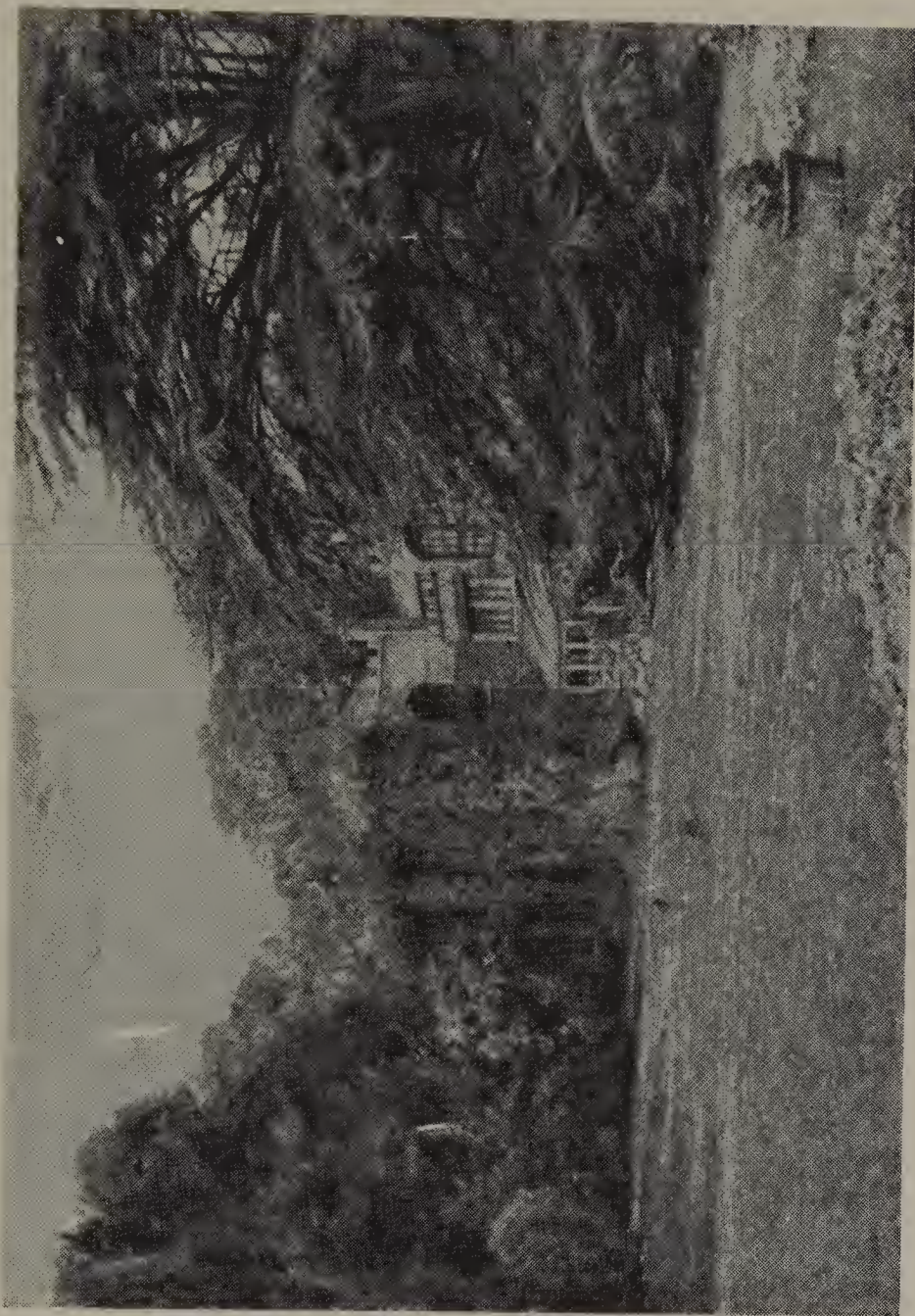
His own sons, Hallam and Lionel, were a great delight to their father. When they were babies he watched and cared for them as tenderly as a woman. As boys they were his constant companions. To "make the lives of children as beautiful and happy as possible" was the motto of the domestic circle at Farringford. Nor were graver matters forgotten. A strict adherence to truth, self-control, industry in pursuit of knowledge, and, above all, courtesy—especially to those of lower social standing—were insisted upon. The worst punishment, Lord Tennyson told me, he could remember receiving from his father was for some boyish rudeness to a servant. The education of the lads, needless to remark, was a matter to which close attention was given, and from their earliest years life at Farringford for them was one of steady work and mental growth, out of doors as well as in ; in knowledge of flowers and trees and birds as well as in Latin and Greek.

Passing from the room of the children, we mounted the narrow flight of winding stairs within

the tower seen from the lawn, and went to the top of the house to the old study of the Poet. This is now a bedroom, and was not used for work for some years before his death. Nevertheless, to all who visit Farringford this little room with its one window looking out upon the lawn, guarded by cedar, ilex, and yew—silent as the grave where its great master lies—contains, perhaps, the spirit of the Poet in greater fulness than any other part of the house.

What memories gather round it. What “reminiscences” might be written if those walls could speak and tell us all they saw and heard.

Tennyson came to Farringford in 1853. Born in 1809, he was forty-four years old when he settled down in his “Wilderness.” He had been made Poet Laureate three years previously, and the achievements which won him that honour had already marked him in the eyes of all competent judges as the greatest poet of his day. But to the general public he was still a comparative stranger; and his income from the writings, which were afterwards to sell by the hundred thousand, was a slender one. It may be said, therefore, that though he had firmly and certainly laid the foundation for his greatness, he had still to build the incomparable



FARRINGFORD

In 1890 I made a drawing of Farringford from almost the same point of view, as I think it is the best of this, the living, side of the house. .

In my first drawing I had the opportunity of sketching the Poet as he walked out in his boat cloak, but this time there were no inhabitants of the place but the gardeners—one, an old friend of mine, William, the coachman of forty years' standing, came to talk with me sometimes—and in their absence some intruding rabbits enjoyed themselves on the lawn.

“Palace of Art” which was soon to outshine, and at last reduce to comparative insignificance, the reputation of men then considered to be among the greatest of English poets. The building of this palace was, it is not too much to say, accomplished more than anywhere else in this little study of his. First came “Maud”: the much misunderstood “pet bantling,” and which he loved, apart from what he knew was great work, because it was so bitterly and violently abused.

We hear in these days that criticism worthy of the name of literary work is dead or dying. Invidious comparisons are made every week between the modern reviewer and his great predecessors, until one wonders why the authors who write these comments allow their publishers to quote “press opinions” at all. There is reason in their complaints. But what are we to say of the gentlemen of the press in 1854, who said that “Maud” was “a spasm,” “a careless, visionary, and unreal allegory of the Russian War,” “a political fever,” “the dead level of prose run mad.”

Again, we hear the reproach made nowadays that “reviews,” even when well done, have little influence upon the sales of a book—and “the good old days” are pined for when a work was “made”

by a review. Then do we wish to return to that time when, through such "mud" and "madness" as the critics in their stupidity poured over "Maud," while the first edition sold 10,000 copies, the second only reached a few hundreds!

But even in the fifties, nothing could stop the mill-race force of Tennyson's appeal to the hearts and souls of all men and women who had ever felt the power of love or remembered that they had been young. With the proceeds of "Maud," Farringford was bought. By the power, and richness, and resistless passion of this one work, the Poet was brought at a bound close to the hearts of the everyday public, and the "pen punctures of those parasitic animalcules"—the critics—ceased.

It is no business of ours here to speak of the Poet's literary work, except as it affected his home, and the life there. But in the case of Tennyson, the two sides of his life—the intellectual and personal—cannot be considered apart. Had his work been a failure and a disappointment, his home life could not have contained the fulness and the peace that, to the credit of all the reading world be it said, was the case. "Maud," after the critics were forgotten, as they soon were, ran into edition

after edition, and of the first four "Idylls of the King," also written in this idyllic home (1858), 10,000 copies were sold in the first week ; of "Enoch Arden" (1864), 60,000 went in a very short time ; and after this all anxiety as to means, of which there had been some before, vanished, and Tennyson knew from that time forward that everything he wrote and chose to publish would be sought after and eagerly devoured in every country in the globe where English could be read.

And while the fame of the Poet was mounting with such swiftness, the man was living quietly and modestly in his island home, climbing to the attic-room every morning after breakfast, and every evening after dinner, to smoke and write.

His "fumitory" he called it—from the tobacco consumed there, his own and other people's. For, as we have been told by every one who has written of a visit to Farringford, it was to this room his friends were taken for talk—after tasting of the hospitable fare below.

Here Charles Kingsley "talked on all sorts of topics and walked up and down for hours smoking furiously, and affirming that tobacco was the only thing which kept his nerves quiet." Here came Garibaldi—after planting a *Wellingtonia*, which

stands near the front entrance of the house. Most of the poets of the time knew this study, with Watts and Millais ; Spedding, Dufferin, and Lecky ; F. D. Maurice, Jowett, and Martineau ; Tyndall, Owen, and Darwin, and a host of other scholars and scientists, soldiers, statesmen, and divines, the echoes of whose talk, learned and humorous, grave and gay, still seems to cling to the walls of the little room. Most of all the deep resonant tones of the Poet himself—when he would read aloud, as he was sometimes induced to do, his poems and those of others, clothing them with an expression and power no other could have given.

Leaving the “fumitory,” I was taken by devious ways to the upper room in the west wing—the newer portion of the house—now the library, and the Poet’s study in later days. It is a fine room, with large bow-windows looking out upon the lawn—ringed with its ilex, fir, and yew. In this room all is the same as when the Poet was living. The same furniture ; the pictures on the walls where he had placed them ; the large writing-table in the bow-window, where he wrote the later “Idylls” and “Locksley Hall Sixty Years After.” There is more comfort here than in the “fumitory,”

and greater wall-space for books; nor are there so many stairs to mount, a consideration in the later days. But the library is marked by the same simplicity as the study used to be. Tennyson was essentially one who disliked luxury of any kind. Soft-cushioned, low arm-chairs with springs he would have nothing to do with. His son told me that upon entering a room he would invariably choose the chair with the hardest seat and the straightest back. In this fine library the furniture is all of the simplest; and, even to the binding of the books upon the shelves, quiet and subdued in colouring and tone.

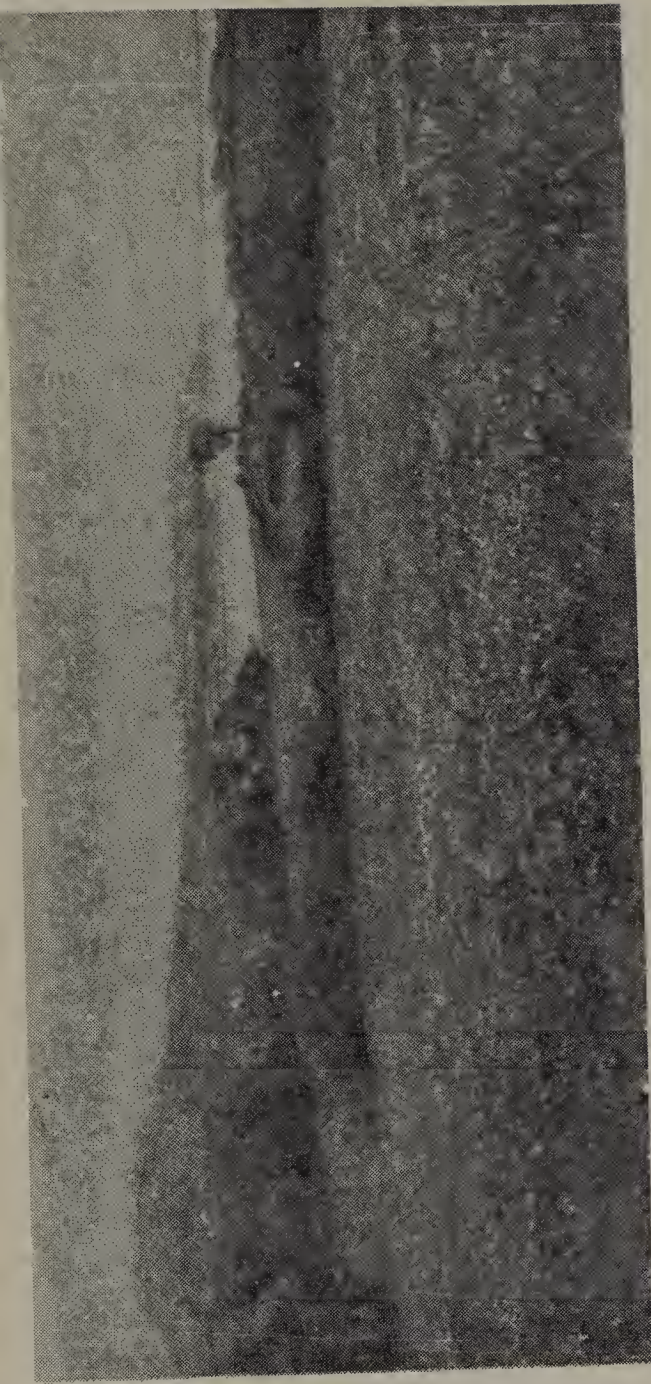
We went from the library to the drawing-room on the ground floor. We were again in the older part of the house, the eastern portion, and from the windows here is a glimpse of the view in Mrs. Allingham's drawing of "Freshwater Bay." It was once the full sweeping view of down and bay and sea, and St. Catherine's Point beyond, which we see in the drawing.

In 1856, when Prince Albert visited Farringford, he noticed and particularly admired this view. Amusingly enough, the family was in the throes of moving in at the time, and the Prince came in, as Lord Tennyson in the *Memoir* describes the

incident, "while the books were being sorted and arranged, all imaginable things strewed over the drawing-room floor, and the chairs and tables in wild disarray."

But that is nearly half a century ago. The "green walls" of trees in the park have shut out all but a strip of sea, "the rosy forelands," and Afton Down. Yet even this remnant of the original outlook is extremely beautiful, especially at night when the moonlight is falling on the waves.

The drawing-room, though in the older part of the house, was spacious enough to be the scene of Farringford's wide hospitality, and, further, was in an especial sense the family meeting-place and the centre of the home life. Here, when Lord Tennyson was a baby, he was carried in his cradle for his father to watch; in this room, when there were no guests, Mr. and Mrs. Tennyson spent their evenings. We are on very sacred ground, but no account of Farringford could be complete were the central fact of the Poet's life omitted. No man had a nobler helpmate than Tennyson. Delicate in health, and for very many years an entire invalid, Lady Tennyson devoted herself entirely to her husband and her family; sharing the great



FRESHWATER BAY

My drawing of the Bay from the Park (near to the lane that runs through it) was painted this May after sunset when the buttercups and daisies had closed their petals. Afton Down rises to the left with its military road—this end of the road is new, as some years ago the old end fell into the sea. The Stag rock just shows among the trees, and beyond are the red headlands on either side of Brook Bay, where lies the submerged "primeval forest." In the distance is St. Catherine's Point, the most southern in the Island.

This view was seen, with a little difference in the immediate foreground, in the early sixties from Farringford House. But gradually the trees have grown up in the middle distance so that only a glimpse of the bay is now left. To recover the old view, Lord Tennyson tells me, he would have to cut away a whole wood. Even from the platform on the roof of the house one cannot now get the clear sweep of the down as seen in a drawing at Farringford made by "Dicky Doyle" of the old view from the drawing-room window.

responsibilities of his position, labouring early and late for him and for her children ; and giving, by the grace of her personality, the “ peace that passeth understanding ” to her home.

On the Down and by the sea, and among the trees and flowers, the Poet communed with nature, and gathered material for the work which he gave to the world, and which the world will keep as a precious possession while our language lasts. In his study he wrought at it alone, and when complete he brought it to read and discuss it with her, whose judgment he greatly valued, and but for whose discerning sympathy much of what is now most prized by his readers would not have seen the light.

Lady Tennyson was never strong, and her son told me that even when he was a boy she was seldom able to walk far, and was always taken, when an expedition on the Downs or to the sea was planned, in a wheeled chair, which his father pushed, and to which he and his brother Lionel were harnessed.

But she was a great worker, and until her son left Cambridge and became his father's secretary, she dealt with the Poet's enormous correspondence, and all her life was an active centre in the social life of her house ; as gracious a hostess to the

humblest visitor, the writer can gratefully testify from personal experience, as to the most distinguished. The Poet was equally kind and without a thought of himself or his greatness. But to meet a crowned head when one is oppressed by one's own littleness is a fearsome thing to most people, and it was one of Lady Tennyson's especial gifts, that she had the intuition to see this nervousness, and the delicate tact and sympathy to know how to remove it.

A wonderful place that drawing-room must have been. We get many a glimpse of it from the reminiscences of friends, and may quote one by Mrs. Bradley, wife of the then Dean of Westminster, dated 1860 and published in the *Memoir*.

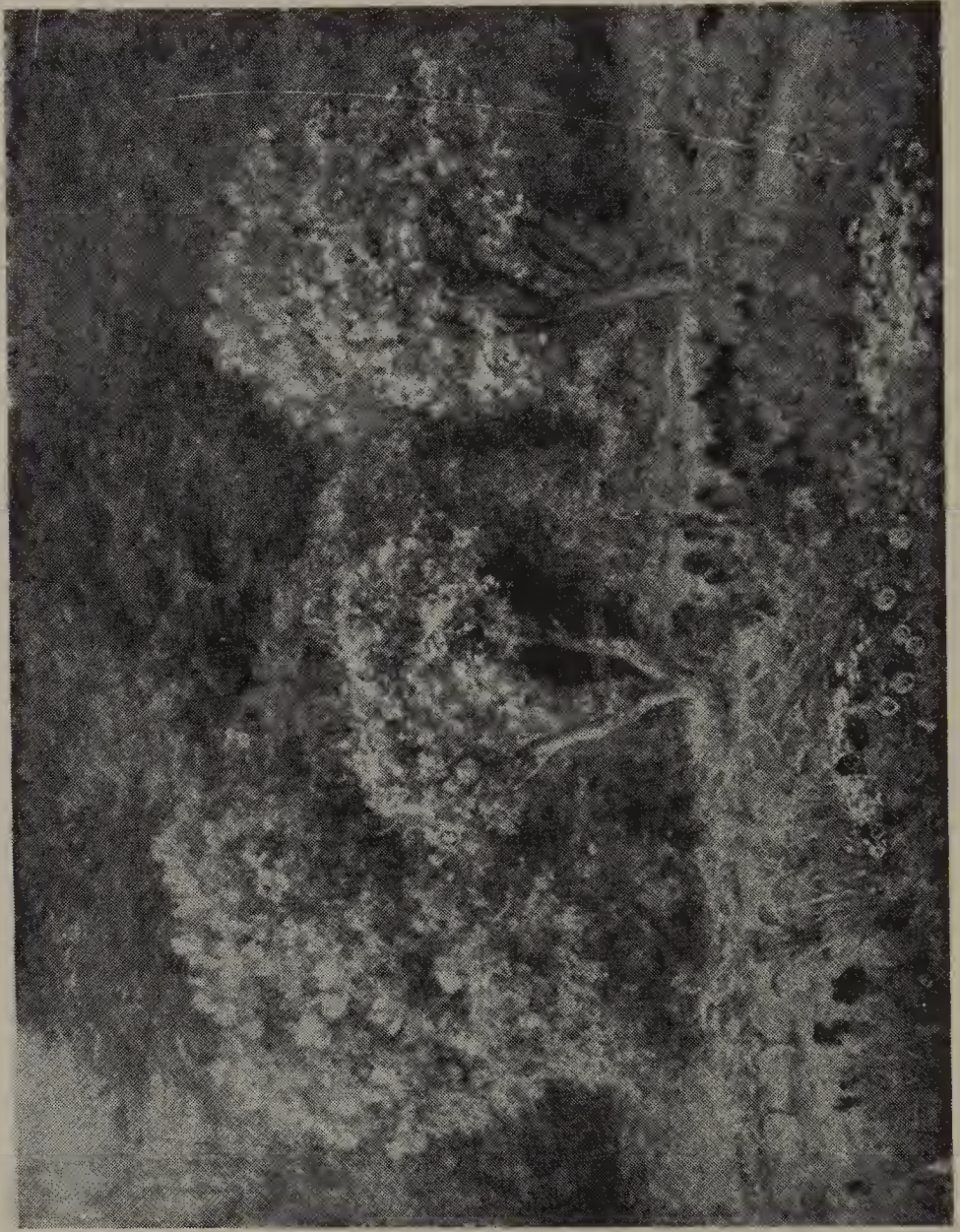
"Those evenings," she writes, "when the Poet, sitting in his old oak arm-chair after dinner in the drawing-room, talked of what was in his heart, or read some poem aloud, with the landscape lying before us like a beautiful picture framed in the dark arched bow-window, are never to be forgotten."

The same picture was seen by the writer a few months ago. The park in the foreground under the shadows of the hills, dark and grey; the bold outline of the Afton Down sharply defined against

the star-lit sky, and the moon above shining on the old house—which, though now bereft of him, is full of vigorous life,—son, and son's son,—shining on the Down he walked upon, and on that which he loved the most, the silver sea.

FARRINGFORD

(continued)



ARBOUR IN FARRINGFORD KITCHEN
GARDEN

Tennyson made this arbour for his wife in the early days of their coming to Farringford. The white lilac (of which there are bushes on either side) was one of his favourite flowers. The old arbour still stands, but is so closely overgrown with ivy that it cannot be much used for sitting in. I remember (when I was painting it, I think) the Poet taking Mr. Birket Foster and myself there to rest one sunny morning: he was in cheerful mood, and was amused by telling, and listening to, funny stories and sayings.

CHAPTER III

FARRINGFORD (*continued*)

THE life of the Poet in his Farringford home was one of ordered, methodical work, brightened with the intercourse of many friends. It was, however, essentially an out-of-door life. His friends were taken long walks: his wife sat or reclined in the arbours of Maiden's Croft and the garden, or on the lawns whenever weather permitted, or was taken for drives by her family. The boys revelled in the open air from daylight to dark, and the Poet himself went solitary tramps through the lanes, over the downs, and by the seashore daily, let the weather be what it might. Even when he was eighty years of age his son told me he would mount the Down from Maiden's Croft and walk to the Beacon and back.

His favourite walk was along the top of the Down to the Needles.

In the afternoon of the day I spent at Farringford Lord Tennyson took me this walk. The wind was blowing hard, and though the sky had cleared and a bright sun was shining it was bitterly cold. At first we thought we could not weather it, but it would be a hurricane indeed which would daunt a Tennyson on his own Down, and, to his visitor's great joy, after a short excursion down the lanes where the Poet walked, and where he often held conversation with the old labourers and country folk, Lord Tennyson mounted the height and steered for the Needles in the teeth of the wind.

There was little conversation. Lord Tennyson pointed out objects of special interest: the house of W. G. Ward, the Catholic metaphysician, a friend of the Poet's for many years, and farther on the masked batteries on the hillside that guard all approaches to the mainland, while we discussed the interesting consequences which would ensue if an enemy's fleet were to venture within range. Then we walked in silence, and my thoughts flew back to the personal associations of the place. The Poet had trodden here every day, and there was scarcely a feature of the landscape about us which had not been immortalised by him.

The sea stretching away to the left into illimitable space; the lighthouse, and the Needle rocks ahead; the westward shore-line of the mainland to our right; the nearer headlands and bays of the Isle, shimmering under the afternoon sun, the very grass beneath our feet—as we followed the Coastguards' walk over the Down—seemed instinct with the life of the past and the personality of him whose home it had been in the fullest sense for so many years. Reaching the lighthouse, we made our way along the cliff to the end, where, sheer down beneath our feet, the sea lashed the rocks below. Here, in his father's last days, an experience happened to Lord Tennyson which is too characteristic of the family to be passed over.

A sailing-ship had been driven on to the rocks in a storm. By some miracle it escaped the Needles, and ran aground near the place above which we were now standing. When the news reached Farringford, Lord Tennyson, who had just returned from a visit to the Queen at Osborne, set off over the down with a lantern, for it was pitch-dark, taking with him his father's nurse, to see if any of the crew of the vessel were hurt, and to give "first aid." It was well they went, for one poor fellow's leg was crushed, and had to be amputated.

Tennyson was beloved by his poorer neighbours and dependants, not only for his kindness and sympathy when they were in trouble, but for the simplicity and directness with which he held intercourse with them. He would talk to old men at work in the field about death and the immortality of the soul as earnestly as if they had been great divines, possibly finding their answers to his questions quite as interesting. In his relations with men of lower social station the Poet was entirely successful in what to many lesser men is the most difficult of achievements, establishing a genuine sincere friendship—a man-to-man comradeship—without, on their side, any shadow of familiarity of an objectionable kind.

A story told me many years ago by a London clergyman illustrates what Tennyson would do in this direction.

A working man, a mechanic, being in my friend's parish, was a great reader of Tennyson's poetry, and in his way an interpreter of it, especially of "Maud," to his friends.

This was communicated one day to the Poet by the clergyman as an interesting fact. To his astonishment, the reply to his letter conveyed an invitation to the critic to spend a week-end



IN THE KITCHEN GARDEN,
FARRINGFORD

The arbour that is shown in the corner of this drawing is newer and less picturesque than the one Tennyson made. Of late years he sat in it much on sunny afternoons in early spring, screened from the cold winds ; and many were the friendly meetings, talks, and teas that privileged friends have enjoyed with the Poet in this little house.

The old cherry tree happened to be in fine bloom the spring I made this drawing, and on the right of it can be seen a little fir tree that was rooted on the top of the old wall.

Later (when the present Lord Tennyson was in Australia) that part of the wall fell down in a great storm, probably partly because of the weight of this strong little tree on its summit.

at Farringford. My friend was somewhat embarrassed. The workman was a blunt and independent person, and at the same time full of the sensitive pride of his class. With the best intentions on both sides, such a visit was a risky proceeding. However, the invitation was duly delivered, and promptly accepted, and down went the working man forthwith as a guest to Farringford. Upon his return he called on the clergyman with beaming face, unable to sufficiently express his enjoyment of the visit. The Poet had taken him walks; smoked with him; showed him where he wrote "Maud," and, best of all, explained a number of points in the poem which had hitherto puzzled him. It was obvious that the visit had been a complete success. Noteworthy, also, as the clergyman remarked, was the delicate respect with which the man afterwards spoke of the home-life at Farringford, while his devotion to the Poet knew no bounds.

This incident will cause no surprise to those who knew the real Tennyson. But to the believers in that too common fiction, which must have emanated from a foiled "interviewer,"—or disappointed tourist,—that Tennyson was a man of morbidly unsociable habits and over-weening self-

concentration, except among his intimates, it will perhaps be a rude shock, and, if so, will have answered its purpose well.

Quietly and unostentatiously, though every honour that fame and popularity could give was now ready to his hand, the Poet lived his busy life at Farringford. He knew the name of nearly everything that grew on his estate, or in the fields and lanes around it, for it was his custom when coming upon any plant strange to his experience to look it up in his botany-book as soon as he returned to the house. In the same careful, exact way, he observed the stars, and made himself acquainted with all the latest discoveries of the astronomers; consequently scientists of the highest rank, such as Herschel, Tyndall, and Huxley, were able to pay warm tribute to the accuracy of the metaphors in his poetry drawn from Nature and Science; while other friends less learned and accurate than himself in such matters have suffered with Lecky the historian, who, writing to Lord Tennyson, says:—

“Some of us were made duly conscious of our true ignorance by the searching questions that were put to us about the flowers and trees which your father knew so well and loved so much. I

remember myself once falling into some disgrace when, having judiciously confessed my ignorance in many cases, I too confidently pronounced a flower to be a cowslip, which was in truth an oxlip; and your father declared that he had persuaded one charming town-bred lady, to whom he was much attached, that a common daisy was a peculiar kind of rhododendron only found in the Isle of Wight."

The attitude of the Poet toward Nature as a whole has been so admirably expressed by his son in his *Memoir* that we cannot forbear quoting his words at length:—

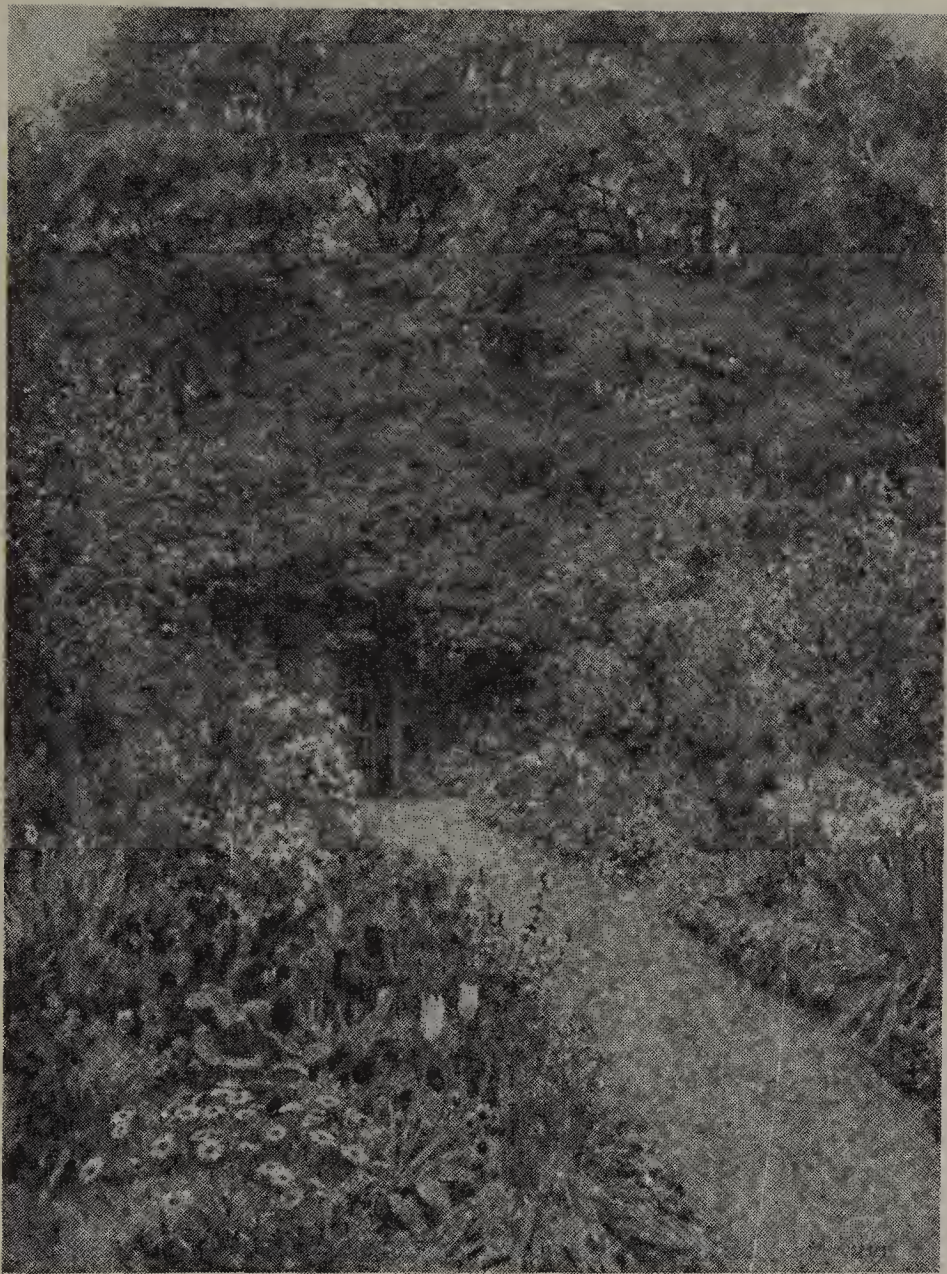
"Everywhere throughout the Universe, he (the Poet) saw the glory and greatness of God, and the science of Nature was particularly dear to him. Every new fact which came within his range was carefully weighed. As he exulted in the wilder aspects of Nature and revelled in the thunderstorm, so he felt a joy in her orderliness; he felt a rest in her steadfastness, patient progress, and hopefulness; the same seasons ever returned; the same stars wheeled in their courses; the flowers and trees blossomed and the birds sang yearly in their appointed months; and he had a triumphant appreciation of her ever-new revelation of beauty."

It is essential to remember this in picturing to ourselves the home at Farringford. Tennyson, though not in any way divorced from human sympathies by his country life, as the intense humanity of his poems proves, was inspired as few writers have been by the closeness of his study of Nature. The perfection of form and colour to be seen in the surrounding way-side flowers and garden plants deeply affected him, and the garden scenes drawn and described by Mrs. Allingham may be said to belong very nearly to his life, both as poet and man.

The summer-house he built in the kitchen-garden, "a bower of rushes," for his wife ; the lawns he swept, the walks he gravelled himself—for no soft-fingered "ineptitude" was Tennyson—were "a constant delight" to him. His kitchen-garden with its fine old walls, which have stood, may be, since the monks of Lyra Abbey walked there, was a favourite haunt ; and in Mrs. Allingham's own work, Lord Tennyson has told me, the Poet took much pleasure.

The painter's art was always a matter of great interest to Tennyson.

Mrs. Allingham has mentioned to me the following recollection of a discussion held with the Poet on this subject :—



THE KITCHEN GARDEN, FARRINGFORD

Leaving the dairy behind, one passes up a long walk bordered on both sides with flowers, the fruit trees and vegetables behind them. The time of this drawing is the middle of May—the elms are in their brightest green, the roses and lilies in bud—the apple blossom is beginning to go over, but the lilacs, hyacinths, pink peony, pansies, and sweet-scented stocks are in perfection, with tulips and wall-flowers still bright, and the edging of aubretia still lilac.

“One day, in 1902,” she writes, “Mr. Birket Foster and I came up to Farringford by special invitation to walk with Tennyson. There was a party of us, and we all went forth up the Needles’ road, white and glistening under the bright sunshine. Mr. Foster and myself were in front of the others, when he chanced to remark on the crudity of colours to be seen in the clothes of a little boy near us—scarlet cap and blue sailor collar. The Poet overheard the words, at once called on us to stop, stuck his stick in the ground, and demanded a reason for the expression.

“What do you mean by that?” he said. “I see nothing to object to in those colours.”

Mr. Foster mildly answered that he could only say that the crude contrast of the red and blue in the sunshine “made cold water run down his spine,” a sentiment with which I expressed my cordial agreement. Tennyson thoughtfully rejoined that he supposed it was with the artist as with the poet, “and just as certain combinations of sounds were delightful or unpleasant to a poet’s ear, so with certain arrangements of colour to the artist’s eye”; and he added: “to many people there would be no difference in melody between

The mellow ouzel fluting through the elms
and
The merry blackbird singing in the trees.

He then plied Mr. Birket Foster with a favourite query of his: "Why a new cottage would be called 'unpaintable,' when, if the same cottage became old, dilapidated, and dirty, with a big hole in the roof, and a half-naked child sprawling over the doorstep, it would be called 'picturesque'?"

To this half-humorous question Mr. Foster made grave reply. Among other things, he touched on the added human interest, as well as beauty, given by time to a house long lived in.

In the same year, a few days after the Poet's death, Mr. Birket Foster wrote to a friend:—

I have been the companion this summer of the great man we have just lost. I was at Freshwater, and had many a walk with Lord Tennyson, little thinking the end was so near. In the last week we had together he said (as we were going through a dark clump of trees), "Does it ever strike you as a landscape painter that going through an avenue of trees with light beyond is like passing through the Grave into Eternity?"

The Farringford house was the birthplace of great poetry, but it was also much more than this.

Tennyson, as a man, as well as a writer, made all who came into personal contact with



THE DAIRY DOOR, FARRINGFORD

This leads from the dairy farm up into Farringford Kitchen Garden, and is, I think, so pretty a doorway, besides being so interesting, that I have twice painted it. The Poet frequently brought his friends down through the Kitchen Garden from Farringford. When I was painting there he always stopped to see how my drawings were getting on.

him feel that he held the noblest ideals of life and duty.

This has been testified by friends without number, and in his son's *Memoir* there are sayings by the Poet which strike to the root of certain pernicious literary sophistries of the day, as the edge of an axe swung by a skilful hand severs the trunk of a tree.

The life among the lovely surroundings of Freshwater was in some ways a stern and strenuous one. We are apt, perhaps, to forget this.

Mr. Lecky, in the reminiscences already referred to, says: "Nature had evidently intended him (the Poet) for the life of the quietest and most secluded of country gentlemen, for a life spent among books and flowers and a few intimate friends, and very remote from the noise and controversies of the great world."

In a sense this was true. But there was another side.

"A great gift," the historian continues, "had made his name a household word among the English race."

It was something more even than this gift which made Tennyson the man he was,—something in his nature greater even than poetic genius,—that

quality which some men call "religion," others "goodness," and which, had he been only a ploughman, would have enabled him to leave the world "a little better than he found it," but which, as he was a poet, endowed him with a power few others have possessed.

He would not tolerate meanness or unworthiness in the highest genius, and with all the strength that was in him gave the lie to the creed which, if it were to become universally accepted, would debase all true art, and, ultimately, mankind; the creed which rules that if a thing is perfectly painted, made, or expressed, it must be "great," no matter how loathsome or obscene the subject may be. In the *Memoir*, his son shows his father's attitude on this matter with great force, and quotes the Poet's epigram—which we venture to repeat in illustration:—

Art for Art's sake! Hail, truest Lord of Hell,
Hail Genius, Master of the Moral Will;
The filthiest of all paintings painted well
Is mightier than the purest painted ill!
Yes, mightier than the purest painted well,
So prone are we toward the broad way to Hell.

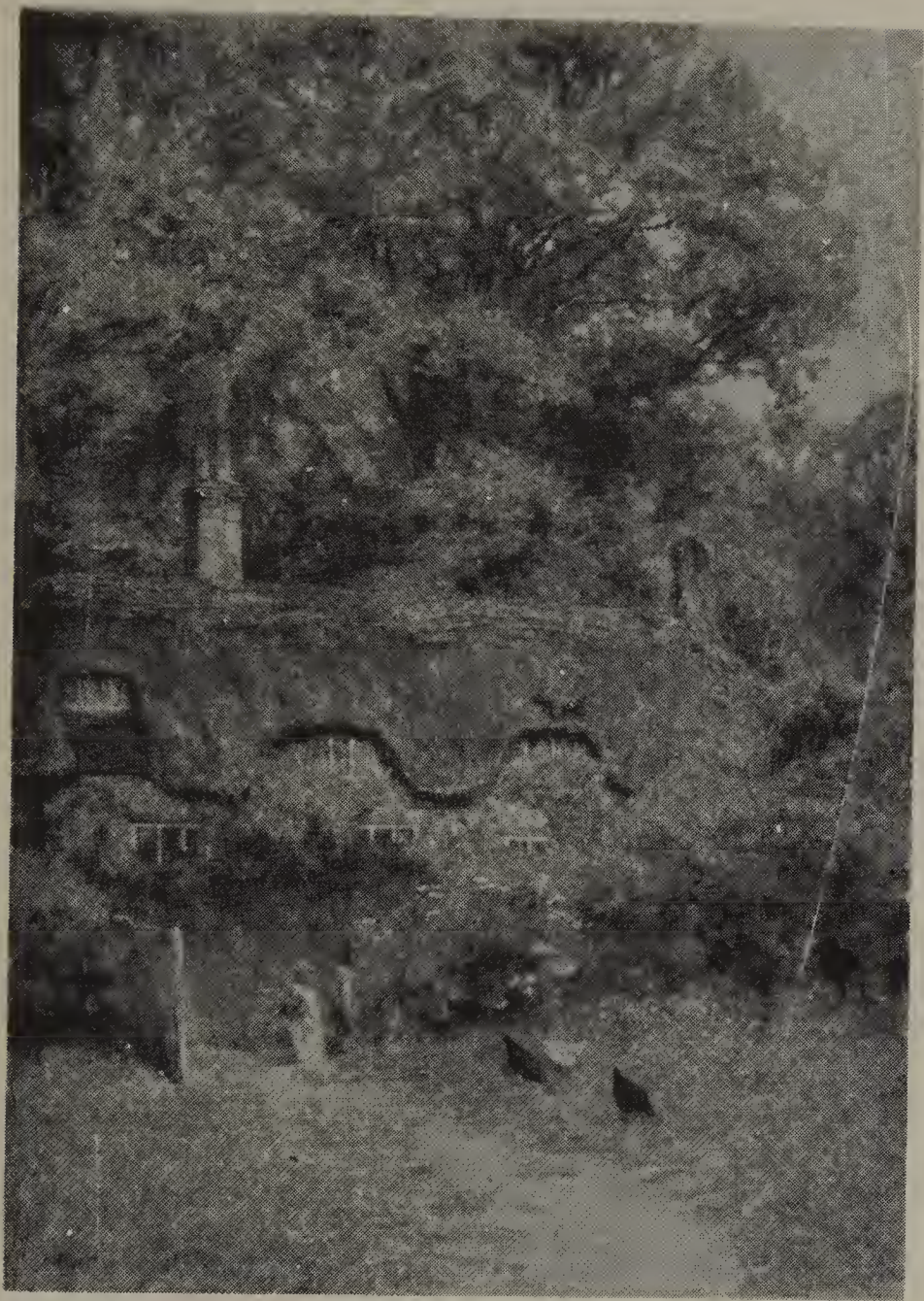
The man who wrote this could hardly, we think, have remained "the quietest and most secluded of country gentlemen" in any circumstances. Rather,

we would say, that in this thoughtful student of nature, tender almost to weakness of the smallest flower-life, there lay the Berserker-like fire and force of the passionate lover of right, as capable, had it been necessary, of battling for his ideals with a sword as with a pen.

The healthy country life he lived in no way weakened this vitality, and the heroes of his poems are men of might and courage, though they are pure in heart, and true lovers for love's sake ; while he wrote nothing which could lower or weaken morality. Real life he faces squarely. He has no kind of sympathy with priggism, or anæmic persons of any description. His men and women often sin deeply, and their conduct is not salved over with smooth words ; but there is not in his work, from first to last, one line which could offend the most fastidious, or need be avoided by the most innocent of readers ; while throughout all his longer poems, underlying the grace and beauty of their diction and their intellectual power, is an earnestness and simplicity of moral ideal that is the true key to his conception of what a man's life-work should be. This is seen chiefly in "The Idylls of the King"—taking the poems written at Farringford—and, most of all, in "The Holy Grail."

His son says in this relation: “‘The Holy Grail’ seems to me to express most my father’s highest self. Perhaps this is because I saw him in the writing of this poem more than in the writing of any other, with that far-away rapt look on his face which he had whenever he worked at a story that touched him greatly, or because I vividly recall the *inspired* way in which he chanted to us the different parts of the poem as they were composed.”

The inspiration which brought forth this Idyll and all the wealth of Tennyson’s work at Farringford came primarily through his genius and remarkable personality, yet it may perhaps be questioned whether the work itself would have been so perfectly planned and so complete but for the surroundings in which the Poet moulded it and brought it forth—the harmonies of life and scene and work in his beautiful island-home.



FARRINGFORD DAIRY AND HOME FARM

The farm is a long old stone cottage, with a deep thatch, and old barns and byres around it, lying at the foot of the kitchen garden, and facing the lane (at its turn here) running through the wilderness property. This drawing was made from the field (in a corner of which stand the ricks) and looks across the lane, down which the children are passing. This last year or two Mrs. Diment's growing family of fowls (not to speak of guinea-fowls and peacocks) have pecked away most of the grass and hedge near the gate.

PART II
ALDWORTH

CHAPTER I

ALDWORTH

ON the borders of Surrey and Sussex, under the lee of the moor of Blackdown, three miles above the little town of Haslemere, lies Aldworth, the summer home of Tennyson's declining years. He never forsook Farringford, and up to the last the winter was usually spent in the Isle of Wight. But Farringford is especially associated with the Poet in the vigour of middle life. He was sixty years of age when he built Aldworth.

There were various reasons for the establishment of the new home ; but perhaps not the least of them is given in a letter of the Poet's to a friend when about to stay in the locality where Aldworth was afterwards built.

“I don't give the name of the place, because I wish it to be kept secret ; I am not flying from the cockneys here (Farringford) to tumble in

among the cockneys there I hope, tho' some of my friends assert that it will be so, and that there will be more cockneys and of a worse kind, but I don't believe them, for the house is quite solitary, and five miles from town and village."

Writing, later, to the Duke of Argyll, he says :—

"My wife has always had a fancy for the sandy soil and heather-scented air of this part of England, and we are intending to buy a few acres and build a little home here whither we may escape when the cockneys are running over my lawns at Freshwater."

Farringford indeed, dear and beautiful as it was, was no longer a comfortable residence for the Poet all the year round. Besides which he wished to be nearer London.

The first visit of the family to the spot where Aldworth was to be is delightfully described by Lady Tennyson in her diary, published by her son in the *Memoir*.

An expedition was made there from the farm where they were staying.

"We went there in an odd procession, Lionel on a donkey with a lady's saddle, I driving in the basket carriage, the rest walking. The wheels spun round in the axles without touching ground

in some of the deep ruts, and the carriage had to be lifted over, William leading the pony carefully. At last we reached the charming ledge on the heathery down. This looks over an immense view bounded by the South Downs on the south, by Leith Hill on the north; copsewood surrounds the ledge, and the hill protects it from the north-west. The foxglove was in full bloom. A. helped me down the mountain-path. We all enjoyed the day thoroughly."

It was on this "ledge" that Aldworth was built. The architect was Mr. James Knowles, who, the diary says, "looked at our sketches and plans, and took them home to put them in 'working form.'"

The planning of the house was largely done by the Poet and his wife, and though their original ideas had doubtless to be modified to some extent, one charming feature in the house is entirely their own.

The hall of Aldworth, lofty and spacious, extends the length of the building, and has glass doors at either end. Wherever one stands there the eye rests upon green lawn and waving trees, and the scent and savour of growing things is wafted upwards in summer-time through the whole house.

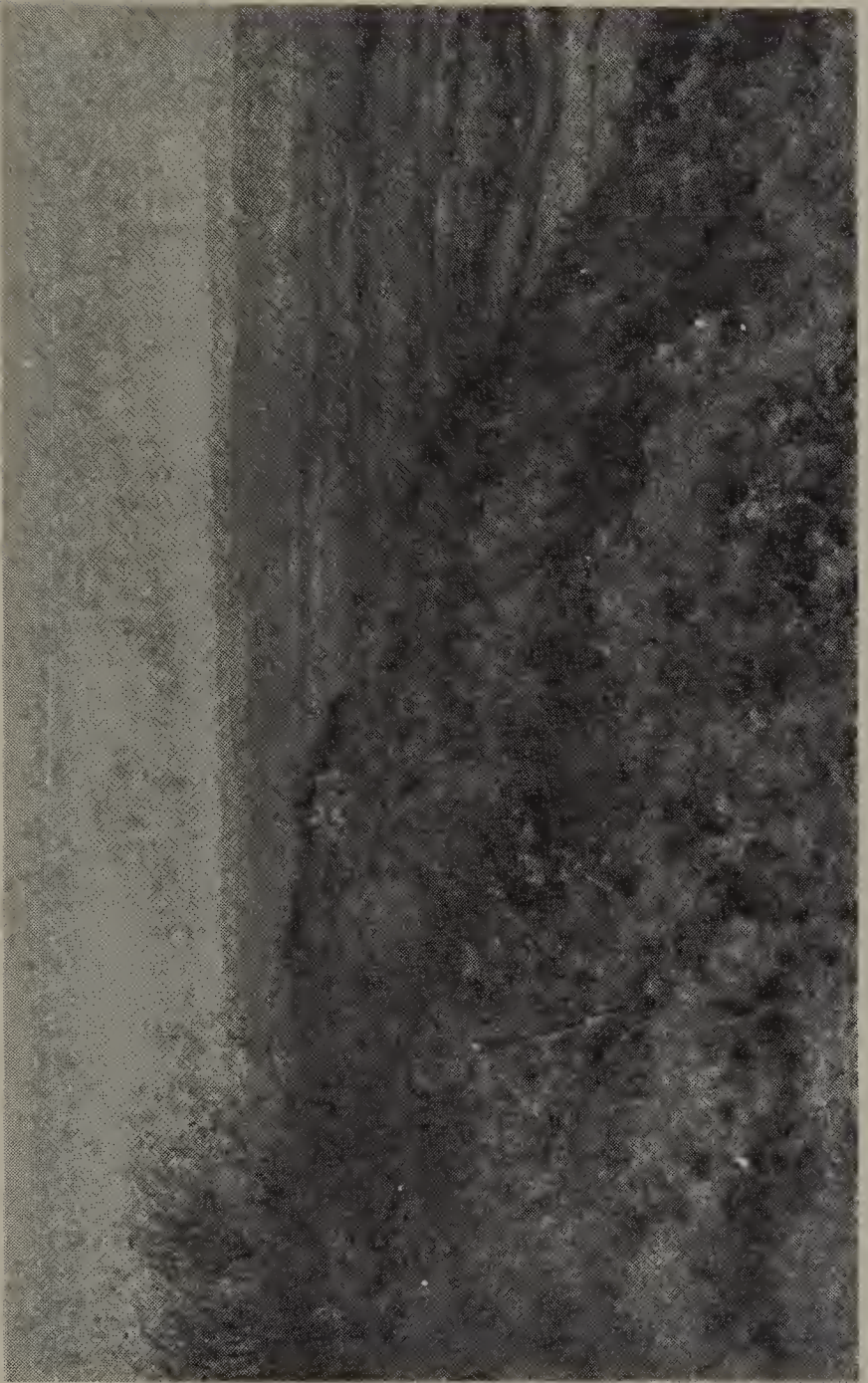
It is inevitable that upon a first visit to Aldworth we should begin by trying to compare it with Farringford.

The contrast between the houses, however, owing to natural differences, is too sharp and clear. Each has an especial charm and beauty all its own ; comparison is impossible. Farringford rests within sound of the sea, and though the Isle of Wight, thanks to the mildness of its climate, has fertile growth of flowers and plant and tree, the clothing of its downs and open spaces is short and spare, and the winds that blow over it are keen-edged ocean breezes.

Aldworth, on the contrary, though high on the ridge of a hill, nestles in the heart of the richest inland country, five-and-twenty miles from the coast. Its moors are knee-deep in heather in places, and the air, though strong, has a softness as of velvet, while over the woods and vales of Sussex that stretch for miles under its windows to the southward there breathes an atmosphere of drowsy plenty and luxuriance.

An American once said that English scenery always looked as if it were "combed and brushed," a simile not inapt for the Weald of Sussex.

There is one feature of Aldworth which reminds



ALDWORTH FROM BLACKDOWN

Although Aldworth commands such a magnificent view, there are few places from which the house can be seen from without. I made this sketch in the eighties, when we were living at Witley, and last autumn, strolling over the down, I found the same point of view. The scene seemed almost exactly as it was about twenty years ago.

one of Farringford—the care which has been taken to guard the home from the gaze of intrusive eyes.

Though not far from Haslemere, which, like all such places within fifty miles of London, has grown beyond knowledge of late years, and is sending forth tentacles of red and yellow villas over the adjacent country roads, attracting “cockneys” of all sorts and sizes as honey brings flies, Aldworth is so placed that hardly a “tourist” of us all would find it out unaided.

A fleeting glimpse of the house may be caught from the road down below, if you know when and where to look for it, and Mrs. Allingham’s drawing shows that there is a spot on Blackdown from whence a bird’s-eye view of the home can be obtained. But unless deliberate trespassing is resorted to, no sight-seer, be he ever so curious and imaginative, could get a complete view of Tennyson’s Sussex home from any distance.

The approach to it from Haslemere after one leaves the high road is by a long winding lane, known as “Tennyson’s Lane.” Trees meet overhead, copsewood surrounds it, and later, it is hedged by high sandy banks thickly overgrown with plant and shrub; squirrels and rabbits, and all other small woodland creatures, disport

themselves over it. It twists and turns, and to the stranger appears to lead nowhere in particular. At the end, when at last he gets there, he only finds himself on the moor of Blackdown, where he may ramble the rest of the day, unless it happens that seeing a white gate he chooses one particular road out of three.

When I paid my first visit to Aldworth, in the summer of 1890, it was with Mrs. Allingham, who knew every path there, and we came over Blackdown from a different direction; but I can distinctly remember the feeling of puzzled wonderment which beset me when my sister said we were within a stone's throw of Aldworth.

The walk had been a trial of endurance, for the rain poured in torrents the whole way. It was therefore glad news to hear that our destination was so close. But where was it? Moorland to left and to right of us, moorland in front of us; a dull purple and brown, surrounded by a thick, impenetrable curtain of rain, cloud, and mist! The only break in the heather was the sandy path we were descending, and which led to a well-made road. A few steps farther on, however, I saw the tops of trees, and then beneath what seemed an arch of green formed by the trees, whose topmost

branches intermingled, I discovered a gate, and lo ! we stepped from this moorland road lined with heather, and heath, and broom, into a clean-swept drive with stables and offices to the right, and in front a shrubbery. The drive curved sharply downward through the shrubbery, bringing us in a few minutes face to face with a noble house, bordered by a terraced lawn.

The Poet was at home, and the excitement at the thought of meeting him took away all my powers of observation at the time, but subsequent visits enable me to describe the house as we see it in Mrs. Allingham's drawing.

The view is taken from the north-eastern corner of the large lawn which stretches, as in the drawing, the whole length of the house. The entrance is round to the right facing the drive. Behind the house rises the summit of Blackdown ; before it, in view of all the front windows, is the great Weald of Sussex described by Tennyson in his "Prologue to General Hamley" before "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade," and often quoted:

Our birches yellowing and from each
The light leaf falling fast,
While squirrels from our fiery beech
Were bearing off the mast,

You came, and look'd and loved the view
Long-known and loved by me,
Green Sussex fading into blue
With one grey glimpse of sea.

In these rooms the Poet lived. Passing from right to left, on the ground floor at the extreme right is one of the dining-room windows; next to this is the bow-window of the "middle-room," where, after dinner, desert was spread, and to which the family would migrate with their guests and spend a delightful half-hour with the Poet, before he retired to his study to work, or to take a favoured guest there to smoke. Next to this window are those of the drawing-room, from whence, when we were there, a full view of the Weald was to be obtained. Now the cypresses are grown up, but between the trees you still have fine glimpses of the great view. At the western end of the drawing-room an oriel window looks out upon a further lawn, one of several described by Lord Tennyson as "surrounded by birch and different sorts of pine, and fir, and cypress—after the fashion of green parlours."

On the floor above, over the drawing-room, the window to the left is that of the Poet's study. Here, during a prolonged attack of rheumatic gout

in 1888,—when the doctors said he would never walk again,—he lay on a couch, which, only this summer, I saw still in the old place. In the *Memoir* (vol. ii. p. 348) his son writes :—“ He told us that, looking out on the great landscape, he had wonderful thoughts about God and the universe, and felt as if looking into the other world.”

After two bad relapses, Tennyson's life was nearly despaired of, and Sir Andrew Clarke, who attended upon him, suggested that, as a last chance, he might be taken in an invalid carriage to Farringford; at the same time he warned Hallam Tennyson, upon whom the principal responsibility lay, that the journey might kill his father. “ This put me in a serious position,” said Lord Tennyson when relating the incident. “ But a thought occurred to me, and I said, ‘ If he were your own father would you risk the journey?’ ‘ I would,’ said Sir Andrew. Upon which,” Lord Tennyson added, “ we did it, and from the day we reached Farringford my father began to get better.” Passing from the study window to the right we come to those of the Poet's bedroom, and then to Lady Tennyson's.

It was in the hall of Aldworth that I saw the Poet first. As Mrs. Allingham and I entered he was descending the stairs, and recognising her he

came forward with a kindly greeting, and took us into the drawing-room.

It is almost a waste of words to describe him,—who has been described so often and so well. A man large in every way : of great height, though stooping, and looking, perhaps, older than usual, as he had a cold, and wore a shawl wrapped round his shoulders. His head with its noble height and breadth, large eyes, and strong aquiline nose. I think what impressed me most was the quietness and repose of his manner and bearing, and the size and power and sensitiveness of his hand—"a magnificent Michel Angelo hand."

In the drawing-room was Lady Tennyson, lying on a couch, Hallam Tennyson and a friend. The conversation was upon everyday subjects : current politics, the prospects of the harvest, and the trees lately planted by the Poet in the Aldworth grounds. Nothing memorable was said, but the true test of a great personality is not so much the impression that is made when its possessor is in the inspired mood, as in the effect of his presence when quietly at ease among friends.

Tennyson's power and charm were never more marked than at such times. On this day he was not well, and spoke little, but he fascinated me as

no other man I have met has ever done. His words came briefly in short sentences, in a deep, rolling voice, which if less musical might have been a little harsh, but was not. Now and then from pure frankness he would contradict the friend who was there, in an uncompromising way that would have been perhaps surprising from any other man, but in his case, from the entire absence of self-consciousness, and the quiet earnestness of his manner, seemed quite natural and proper. William Allingham in his private diary, when giving an account of his first visit to Farringford, mentions this characteristic of Tennyson's, and says, "Contradictions *from him* are no way disagreeable."

This was the power of the *man*. About his whole presence there was so fine an atmosphere of noble candour and scorn of sham convention, sham politeness, sham—anything, which, with his natural kindliness, prevented anything that he might say from hurting the most supersensitive of persons.

He was, in society, actively kind and considerate. A friend says: "He would sit by a very commonplace person, telling stories with the most high-bred courtesy, endless stories not too high or too low for everyday conversation."

Another writes to his son :—

“He had a refreshing hatred for the common-places of intercourse, and a mistrust of what he called the ‘humbug of Society,’ which made him dread ever attending anything in the shape of a party ; but to visitors in his own house he showed ideal hospitality, giving his friends a feeling that they had come to a home indeed, bestowing *himself* upon them in a way which the most genial of the earth alone understand.”

It is the writer's experience that a common superstition prevails among the younger generation, when they talk of Tennyson apart from his poetry, that as a man he was constitutionally morose, and unsociable to a marked degree. Cross-examination generally elicits the admission that somebody who met the Poet by chance, expecting eloquence and epigram, found him taciturn and uncommunicative : a man of long silences and solitary habits. This is very probable, and the reason a very simple, ordinary one : namely, that this great poet was a very, very busy man. Lord Tennyson, in the *Memoir* (vol. ii. p. 210), says : “He was not unfrequently abstracted in mood for days while he was composing, which made him appear brusque to strangers. . . . His very directness and simplicity,



FROM THE PORCH, ALDWORTH

We were staying in Haslemere during the summer of 1880, and my husband and I often walked up to Aldworth. Tennyson pointed out this as one of his favourite views—a little glimpse of a farmhouse with the blue distance beyond, framed in by the pots of geraniums and formal trees on his terrace, and then by the arch of his porch. So I proposed to sketch it for him, and there was a sort of compact that, in return, he would allow me to make a drawing of himself, an operation by no means pleasant to him.

moreover, caused him sometimes to be misunderstood."

Tennyson was, as a rule, a rapid writer. But before he put pen to paper his brain frequently laboured severely in long periods of concentrated thought. Nor was his work done altogether, or even chiefly, in his study. A man of active habits and great physical vitality, when some would have mused over their ideas in an arm-chair Tennyson found inspiration in his long tramps over moor and down, through lane and field, and by the seashore, or even when delving with spade and hoe in his garden. Yet all this time, while hand or limbs were hard at work, his brain was revolving problems of construction, composition, and expression. Only for short periods and at stated times could he throw off the burden of his work and give himself full relaxation of mind and brain. What he was at these times to his friends, and as a play-fellow to his children, all who really knew him have testified.

It may be said that this is so obvious as to be hardly worth mentioning. We say it here with all possible emphasis, because while no sane person would expect agreeable conversation from a merchant on 'Change in his office hours, a surgeon

conducting an operation, or a barrister pleading in court, yet if a poet plead his work as a justification for avoiding strangers, or small-talk generally, a howl arises against his outrageous "self-concentration."

When I saw Tennyson it was in his latest days, when, in addition to hard work which went on to the last, he was suffering from increasing shortness of sight and other infirmities; yet I was struck, as so many have been, by the sympathetic way he threw himself into the conversation of the hour, as if he had nothing in the world to do but to talk to us.

When the other friend took his leave we rose to go. But this was not allowed. A storm was raging on Blackdown, and the Poet in his most decisive tones told Mrs. Allingham that until the rain had ceased she should not leave his house. His son then proposed that we should all adjourn to his study and listen to a phonograph, a gift from its inventor, Edison, and into which Tennyson had already read some of his poems. Furthermore, it was suggested to the Poet that he might perhaps read a poem now. To our great joy he consented, and to his son's study we went, the "balcony-room" it is called, above the Poet's bedroom, the name being given from the balcony which had

been built outside the window. Upon arriving there, I was taken by Tennyson on to this balcony, in spite of the rain, and shown the great view over the Weald, and the spot where, had it been a bright, clear day, we might have seen the "one grey glimpse of sea"

By this time the phonograph was ready, with Hallam Tennyson holding a book of his father's poems open in his hand. The piece chosen was "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade," a choice which gave me a feeling of vague uneasiness. How could even Tennyson himself—frail as he seemed to-day—do justice to such a tremendous piece of cavalry music?

Slowly the Poet went to the seat placed for him, wearily he dropped into his chair, stooping over the book, as the instrument was adjusted, with short-sighted eyes. The greatness of the man was visible in every line of the noble face, but his strength seemed to belong to the past. Only the power of what had been seemed left.

He raised the book, caught the right focus, asked his son if all was ready, and began to read.

Then, in a marvellous way, a complete change came over him. Twenty years dropped from his shoulders, and I found myself held and carried away

by the power of a wonderful voice. His head was erect now, his eyes shone with the stern gleam of a man under fire, his chest expanded, his back straightened.

Slowly and grandly his great voice hummed out the opening lines—

The charge of the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade!
Down the hill, down the hill, thousands of Russians,
Thousands of horsemen, drew to the valley—and stay'd.

The scene rose before me. I was carried by the voice to a battlefield. I heard the tramp of the grey-coated legions, and when he paused at the end of the line I saw them halt.

The voice rose again, quickening, with a clink of sabre and spur—

For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hundred were riding by
When the points of the Russian lances arose in the sky;
And he call'd "Left wheel into line!" and they wheel'd
and obey'd.

Clear and crisp rang out the word of command, while the swing of the column could be distinctly felt,

And he turn'd half round, and he bad his trumpeter sound
To the charge.

The word came with a crash, followed by tones that held within them the grit of steel and roar of galloping hoofs—

And he rode on ahead as he waved his blade
To the gallant three hundred whose glory will never die—
“Follow!” and up the hill, up the hill, up the hill,
Follow’d the Heavy Brigade.

When the reading was finished I found myself trembling with excitement. Never before, and never again, will such an experience befall me.

We listened now, in turn, to the reproduction of the poem by the phonograph, and the Poet was much amused at the force with which the word “charge” smote upon the ear.

Then the cylinder was changed and I heard “Maud,” which had been read three weeks ago. The lighter words in this reproduction were almost inaudible, but the passionate lines were distinct and powerful, and—

She is coming, my own, my sweet ;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed—

came with a force that was almost painful in its intensity.

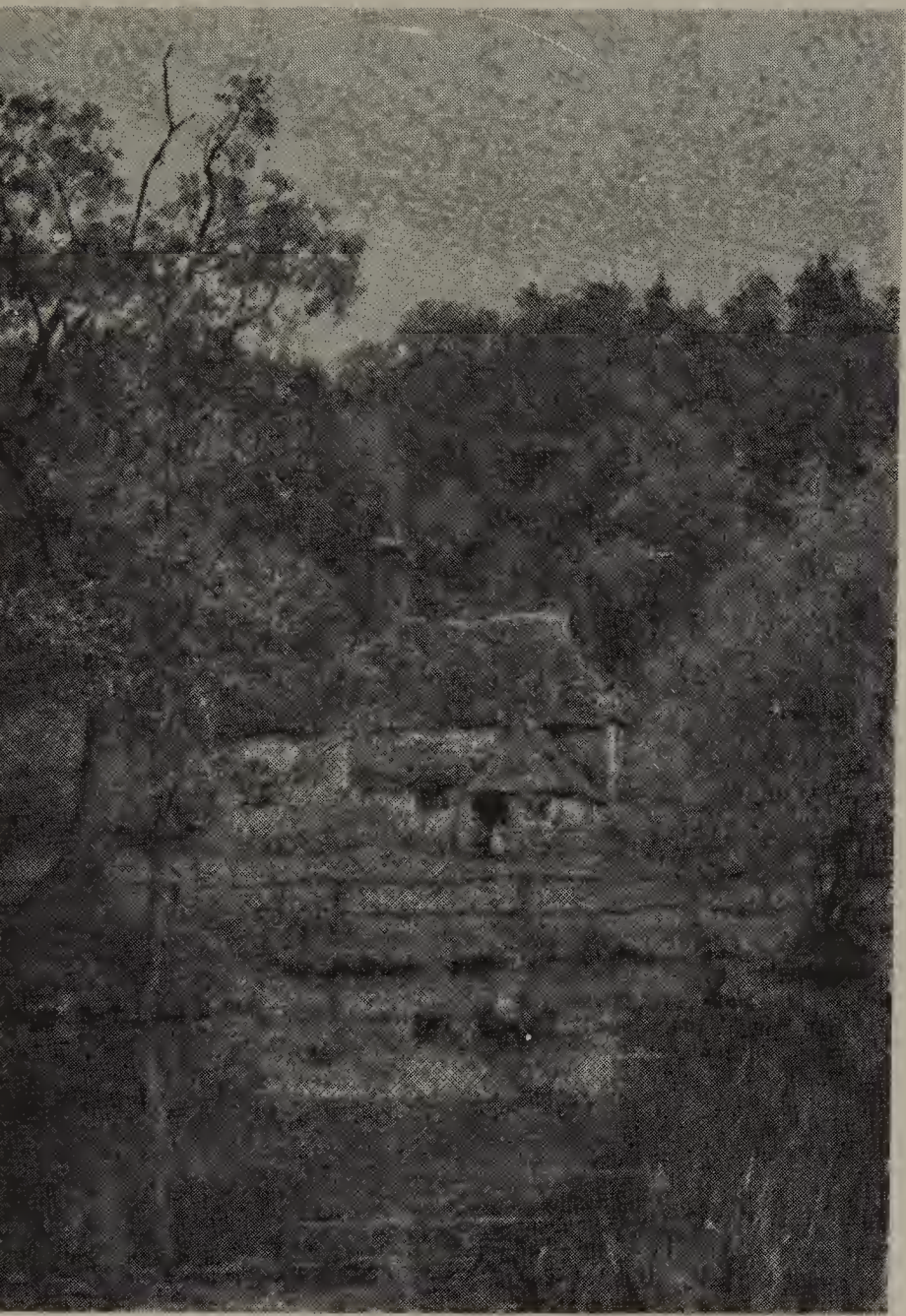
“Break, Break, Break” followed; and while the words

But O for the touch of a vanish’d hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still !

were repeated in his deep, tender tones, I heard the door close. The poet had left us. I never saw him again.

ALDWORTH

(continued)



CHASE COTTAGE AND POND

Lord Tennyson, who showed me this secluded spot some years ago, told me that it was one of his father's favourite walks from Aldworth. It lies in a hollow of Blackdown. The Poet always loved water (running water when possible), and liked to come and look into the depths of this shady pond, and to watch the little gold birch and beech leaves floating on its surface—as they floated last autumn when I made this drawing.

CHAPTER II

ALDWORTH (*continued*)

I SAW Aldworth for the second time last year, and again with Mrs. Allingham as my guide. Our way lay over Blackdown. It was in late autumn: the sky was grey, and a blue haze hung over the distant hill and vales around us, but we had a full view of the country, which the Poet had traversed in every direction with untiring energy, and the keenest enjoyment, every summer during the last twenty years of his life.

Blackdown stands high. It is the highest hill in all Surrey but one—Leith Hill, which only claims to be a few feet higher. A moor of considerable extent is Blackdown, where a stranger, even in broad daylight, if caught in a mist, may wander fruitlessly for many hours, and if unlucky enough to be lost after sunset, must spend the night in the heather, with the probability, if he is not extremely careful,

of falling headlong into one of the disused sand-pits, of which the moor possesses many, and which are so much overgrown with heather and bushes as to be a serious danger to the unwary in the dim evening light.

A spot of wild, rugged beauty is Blackdown—shaggy moorland everywhere, with great patches of heather and heath and gorse growing in rich abundance in the fertile sandy soil. Approaching Aldworth from the west, down to our left ran a deep valley, from which rose a great growth of oak, fir, and beech trees. Here is the Chase Cottage and pond in Mrs. Allingham's drawing (p. 72). Beyond the valley, still farther to the left, rose Hindhead, one of Tennyson's favourite walks; farther away still, to the northward, Banacle, on which there used to be one of the old semaphore stations over the village of Witley; nearer to us was Gray's Wood, and Wormley Wood hill, on which Birket Foster lived for many years and for shorter periods George Eliot and Hook the artist. From thence the eye is caught by a farther range of hills, the Hascombe range, and beyond that the great landmark of this country side, Leith Hill itself. At the foot of Leith Hill, and rolling away to the south as far as we could see under the blue haze,

was the Weald of Sussex, seen from the Poet's windows. To the south also, Petworth and Arundel, and a richly wooded country stretching to the South Downs above Brighton and to Fairlight.

Walking onwards, with this great panorama under our eyes, we passed, on our right, the clump of fir trees drawn by Mrs. Allingham (p. 76) and called by Tennyson "The Temple of the Winds," another favourite spot of his, below which was "Blackdown House," a fine old Elizabethan mansion, the property of Mr. Philipson Stow, and in which a room is shown where Cromwell slept. Then, presently, we struck the familiar road with its long-armed white gate, shut only once a year to preserve the private right-of-way, and so reached Aldworth once more.

There was much change in these fifteen years.

A swift growth of shrub and tree had raised the "green walls" surrounding it, and shut out some of the view of the Weald from the lower windows, while the firs near the front entrance and bordering the eastern side of the terrace and lawn, planted by the poet in the seventies, had shot up into great trees, and visitors arriving at Aldworth from Blackdown must approach closely indeed ere they could see the house and terraced lawn. Aldworth itself

was covered, as in Mrs. Allingham's drawing, with Virginia creeper, richly red and brown.

This second visit to the house was a pilgrimage rendered especially sacred by the remembrance of the former glimpse when the Master was still there. As at Farringford, Lord Tennyson was our guide throughout. We paced the terrace, and he showed us, at the north-eastern corner, a strong young oak tree planted by his father on Jubilee Day, 1887, when the Poet wrote his ode "On the Jubilee of Queen Victoria." He told me how his father paced here up and down for exercise when he could not go farther—from bad weather or other causes—and how his guests would come here and walk with him. This conjured up a hundred interesting reminiscences, for in these latter days of the Poet's life, Aldworth being conveniently near to London, the guests were many and among them some of the best-known names in England.

On this terrace members of the Royal Family—the Princess Mary, Duchess of Teck, and the Duchess of Albany—walked with the Bard of their House, an old and valued friend. Tennyson was a member of the Royal Household in a sense far beyond the formal meaning of that term. In the *Memoir* Lord Tennyson gives, by permission, some



THE TEMPLE OF THE WINDS, BLACKDOWN

A group of fir trees stands on the far south-eastern corner of Blackdown, exposed to all the winds of heaven. There is a wide view over the Weald of Sussex from this point, and southward, on very clear days, one may get a glimpse of the sea between the hills. Just below the trees are the ruins of an old summer-house where Tennyson, in days gone by, used to sit.

I did this drawing some years ago. The young trees and shrubs have since grown up and choked the heather that used to border the little path going to the firs.

of the correspondence that passed between the Poet Laureate and his Sovereign, and members of her family. The value of these letters is very great. Not only do they contain a high tribute to Tennyson's personality from one whose judgment was exceedingly good and whose candour was proverbial, but they have a deep historical interest.

There was in this intercourse between the Queen and her Poet a warmth of mutual regard and affectionate understanding which did honour to both. Tennyson's reverence for his Sovereign and devotion to her service were as heartfelt as the most exacting monarch could desire ; while, at the same time, there was never the smallest tincture of flattery or false gloss of courtiership in anything he wrote or said. On the other hand, it is made evident that the nobleness, and religious and moral force, in her Poet's writings moved Her Majesty as deeply as his genius ; and so at last, when she had come into personal contact with the man himself, and saw how entirely the thoughts in "In Memoriam" and "The Holy Grail" and his deeper writings were a part of his nature, she gave him her friendship with a noble, dignified simplicity.

Thus we have such letters as these, which we venture to requote, from the *Memoir* :—

FROM TENNYSON TO THE QUEEN, AUGUST 1883.

Dear and honoured Lady, My Queen—Your Majesty's letter made me glad that even in so small a matter I may have been of some service to you. I will not say that "I am loyal," or that "Your Majesty is gracious," for these are old hackneyed terms used or abused by every courtier, but I will say that during our conversation I felt the bonds of that true friendship which links human beings together, whether they be kings or cobblers.

My wife is very grateful for your Majesty's most kind remembrance, and I am always your affectionate servant,

A. TENNYSON.

And from the Queen in 1891, written in acknowledgment of a telegram of congratulation he sent on the fiftieth anniversary of her wedding-day, and of the following inscription which he wrote for a Prayer-Book presented to her by her children :—

Remembering him who waits thee far away
And with thee, Mother, taught us first to pray,
Accept on this your golden bridal day
The Book of Prayer.

Dear Lord Tennyson—How kind it is of you to have written these beautiful lines, and to have sent the telegram for this ever dear day, which I will never allow to be considered a sad day. The reflected light of the sun which has set still remains ! It is full of pathos, but also full of joyful

gratitude, and he, who has left me nearly thirty years ago, surely blesses me still !

Your son, whose acquaintance I was much pleased to make, was desirous of getting the photographs of our tableaux, which he saw, and I send a set to-day for your acceptance, hoping you may be interested by them.

I hope that you are well, and that I may some day see you again.

Asking you to remember me kindly to Lady Tennyson and your son, believe me always, yours affectionately,

VICTORIA R.I.

Among those who came to Aldworth was Gladstone, a friend of very many years standing ; the Duke of Argyll, another old friend ; Lord Wolseley, Lord Napier of Magdala, Lord and Lady Dufferin, Boyd Carpenter (Bishop of Ripon), with all the oldest friends who were still left—Jowett, Aubrey de Vere, Palgrave, Allingham, and many others.

The friendship between William Allingham and Tennyson dated from 1853. In the *Memoir* (Appendix, vol. i.) is given a reminiscence by the Irish poet of his first visit to Farringford. From 1863 to 1870 he lived at Lymington, and during these seven years was much at Farringford. A man of deep thought and cultivated mind, and of a poetic power to which Tennyson himself testified in high terms, there were few men who knew the Poet better or were able to appreciate his genius

more highly than William Allingham. In 1876 Mr. Allingham brought his wife to Aldworth. In 1880 the Allinghams spent the summer at Haslemere, and the following year settled down at Witley, a few miles away, and from that time onwards the two families met frequently, both in Sussex and the Isle of Wight.

Speaking of the Poet's friends, a word may be said upon the friendship between Browning and Tennyson. Seldom have two men grown to such a height of fame through the same gift and during the same generation, who, with immense differences of style and individuality, yet preserved from first to last so true an appreciation of each other's powers as artists, and such love for one another as men.

There was perfect candour between them: neither pretended that he admired all the other wrote. But the truest spirit of comradeship prevailed, and when they could praise, which was often, they praised: when they could not, they were silent.

When "Maud" first came out, and was violently abused by the critics, Browning was one of the men of mark who recognised its merit. Upon the publication of "Enoch Arden," Browning writes:

“‘Enoch’ continues the perfect thing I thought it at first reading, but ‘The Farmer,’ taking me unawares, astonished me more in this stage of acquaintanceship. ‘Boadicea,’ the new metre, is admirable, a paladin’s achievement in its way. Do but go on, and I won’t mind adding, may I continue to see and hear you, it is reason enough for being ready to do so.

“Good-bye and God bless you! give my congratulations to Mrs. Tennyson. . . . Ever yours on the various stations of this life’s line, and, I hope, in the final refreshment-room ere we get each his cab and drive gaily off ‘Home’—where call upon Robert Browning.”

Lord Tennyson says in the *Memoir*: “Among the compliments paid my father, that which he valued most was his old friend Browning’s dedication of a selection of his own poems—

To Alfred Tennyson,
In poetry illustrious and consummate,
In friendship noble and sincere.

“‘These two brother-poets,” Lord Tennyson adds, “were two of the most widely-read men of their times, absolutely without a touch of jealousy, and revelling as it were in each other’s power.”

The quiet later days at Aldworth were bright-

ened with much friendship and the companionship of kindred spirits, for the Poet often went up to town and met there friends, old and new.

Meantime the surroundings in this beautiful home were no less precious and necessary to his life than the simple country ways of Farringford, where it must not be forgotten he still spent a great portion of each year.

Aubrey de Vere writes in a note published in the *Memoir*—

“Farringford he never forsook, though he added another house to it; and assuredly no poet has ever before called two such residences his own. . . . The second house was as well chosen as the first. It lifted England's great poet to a height from which he could gaze on a large portion of that English land he loved so well, see it basking in its most affluent summer beauty and only bounded by ‘the inviolate sea.’ Year after year he trod its two stately terraces with men the noblest of their time . . . but none more welcome to him than the friends of his youth. The days which I passed there yearly with him and his were the happiest days of each year, and the sea-murmurs of Freshwater will blend with the sighing of the woods around Aldworth for me, as for many

more worthy, a music if mournful, yet full of consolation."

Into these woods, upon the occasion of another visit, Lord Tennyson took Mrs. Allingham and myself, and so to nearly all the favourite haunts of the Poet which Mrs Allingham has drawn.

We passed down the smaller lawn, at the western end of the house and where there are beds of flowers bordered by spreading trees, called Lady Audrey's garden after the present Lady Tennyson, who designed it. Thence along green rides and down a garden path to a door in a wall which divides the garden from the wood. This spot is interesting. "Black Horse Copse" it is called—the name by which the land went on which Aldworth is now built. Here, in a hollow of the woods above the garden wall, once stood an inn—"The Black Horse"—the resort and refuge of smugglers, and from the copse running down to the road in the vale below there is still the "Packhorse Lane"—by which the enemies of the excisemen brought up their goods on packhorses from the coast, at Little Hampton, twenty-five miles away.

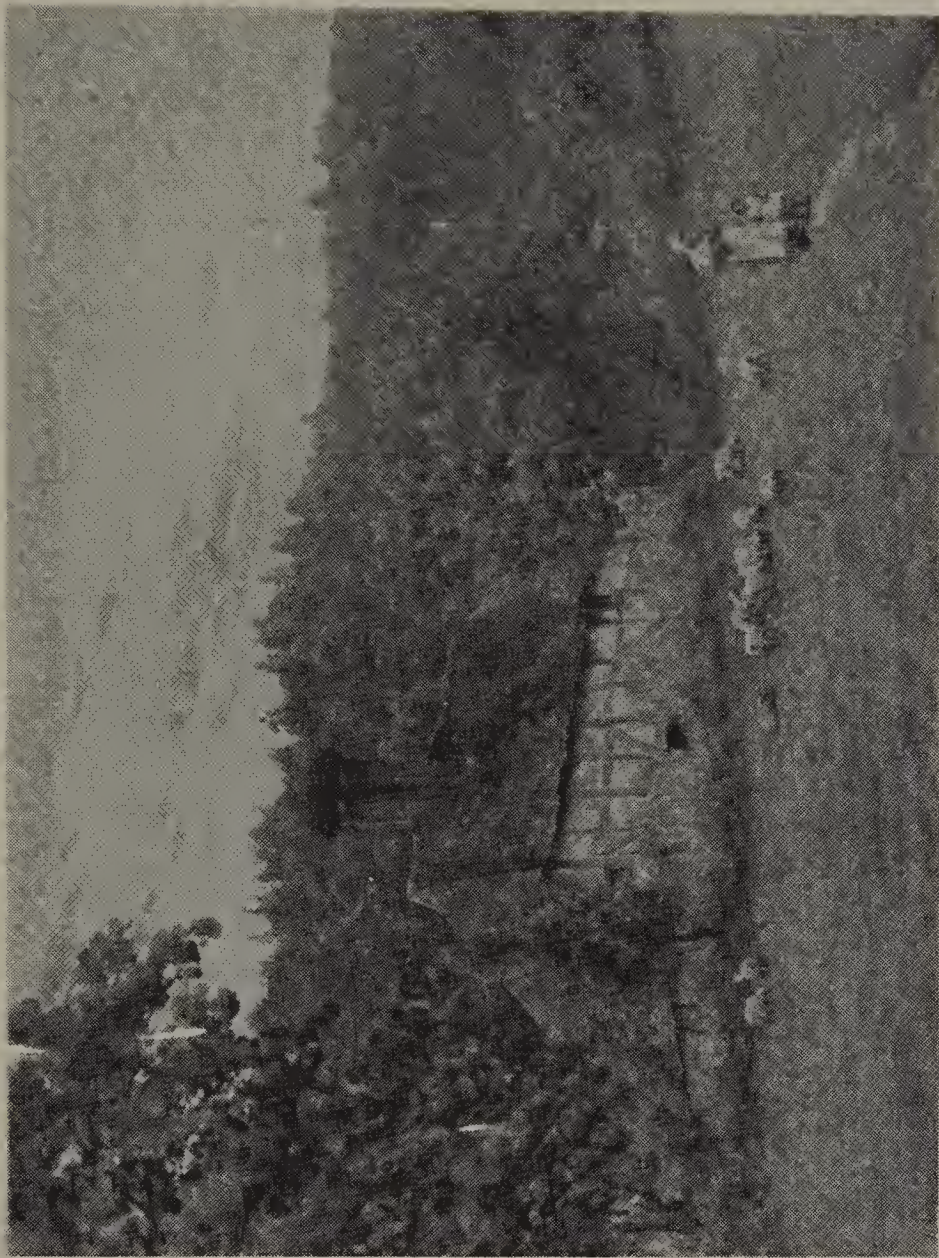
A wide path, carefully graded downhill so that Lady Tennyson might be taken over it in her chair,

leads from hence to one of the Poet's favourite spots—"The Fox's Holes." Thick undergrowth lines the path on either side, while around it are woods of pine, oak, and larch, all on the Aldworth estate given to the Tennyson family by Cecil Boyle, the present Lady Tennyson's brother, who died fighting for his country in South Africa, and through which a path continues, where the Poet could roam free from intrusion or surprise from strangers.

Fox's Holes is a dell in the woods. Up the green sides of the dell foxes still creep from the bottom there and drink perhaps at the little rill, one of the tributaries of the river Arun.

At this spot, on one occasion when Mrs. Allingham had gone over alone to Aldworth to paint at Fox's Holes, the Poet accompanied her, and as there were no chairs available for the artist, helped her to arrange bundles of pea-sticks for seats, saying as he sat down beside her: "I should like to paint. It does not look very difficult,"—with a smile,—“it must be much pleasanter to paint than to write.”

Lower down, after traversing the path which, as it passes farther into the woods, becomes too narrow for more than one person to thread at a time, we



COTTAGE AT ROUNDHURST

One day when my husband and I were over from Witley, Tennyson took us for a beautiful walk, within sight of this old cottage, but it was too muddy that day for us to get near it.

Later, in '90, '91, and '92, I often walked over the Down from Haslemere to paint, and made this and several other drawings of the cottage.

One day Tennyson walked with us from Aldworth, and rested on a cottage chair in the little garden (at the far side of the cottage in this drawing) by a little rillet of spring water rushing down from the hillside.

come to "Roundhurst" cottage—drawn and described by Mrs. Allingham. At one point here the Poet always paused to hear the trickle of the stream, and would often stand there, his son told us, a long time, leaning on his stick, thinking. It is well known that all sounds of running water had an especial charm for him.

From Roundhurst we entered a path leading to a square stone house built, so Palgrave conjectured, by Inigo Jones. An interesting building historically, and which used to belong to the Holles family—the family it is said of the Holles of Parliamentary fame. It was Denzil Holles who held the Speaker down in his chair in the days of the Long Parliament, and afterwards, as an uncompromising Presbyterian, was a bitter enemy of Cromwell and the army. The house is guarded by the remains of very fine old gates, near which stood the picturesque old shed, which is given in Mrs. Allingham's drawing.

We had now reached the road in the valley, and, returning, wound upwards to the terrace before the house by a thickly shaded drive.

There was the same utter silence as at Farringford. In this well-kept walk, winding amid a wealth of green growing things, there was the same sense

of peace as in the Island home, yet with a difference. The Sussex verdure, as has been said, is closer and deeper than that at Freshwater, and the fancy came that it was like the completion of the Poet's life and work. The earlier home was a place of promise and of greatness to be. About Aldworth there is an atmosphere of stately maturity, and of the promise that had been fulfilled.

Entering the house, this sense grew stronger. The spacious hall and staircase, and the noble rooms, appropriately placed, with their view over the Weald,—all compactly planned, and used as planned.

Farringford, the old home, was a place that had grown: Aldworth had been built. Each was perfect of its kind. Each had an especial charm, and both breathed the personality of the Master spirit which had lived in them.

In Aldworth, as at the Island home, Lord Tennyson has preserved much as it was in his father's time.

In the hall, as one enters, the first objects which strike the eye are two great wooden bears which Tennyson used humorously to crown with his great sombrero hats. The fine picture of Edward Lear hangs on the western wall, a knight in

armour in the desert, an illustration of the lines in Tennyson's poem "The Palace of Art"—

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract of sand,
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

A bust of the Poet by Woolner rests upon a table, and behind it hang mezzotints by Holbein and Bartolozzi.

From the hall we go into the middle room, to the left, the cosiest room in the house. The Poet was very fond of this room. Here there is the portrait by Watts of Lady Tennyson. It is a wonderful piece of characterisation. As I gazed at it, the day when I had met her thirteen years ago came back to me with startling vividness. The presence of the great Poet that afternoon had been a little awe-inspiring, and like many another, probably, in the same position, I should have sat bashful and dumb but for the unerring tact and gentle sympathy of Lady Tennyson. In this portrait, also, the great artist has caught the prevailing quality of the face—the tenderness and spirituality—a face not wanting either in its lines of strength.

We have spoken already of all that Lady

Tennyson was to her husband, her children, and her home, but we cannot forbear adding a fragment of her son's beautiful tribute to her in the *Memoir*.

"By her quiet sense of humour," he said, writing of what she was to his father, "by her selfless devotion, by her faith as clear as the heights of the June-blue heaven, she helped him to the utmost in the hours of his depression and of his sorrow."

On the other side of the door hangs the other Watts portrait of Hallam and Lionel Tennyson as children, and one of Tennyson himself at twenty-seven by Lawrence—a smooth and beardless face, but with marked features that bore already many lines of thought, a broad massive forehead, and heavy waves of hair.

There are other notable pictures much prized by the Poet. A Guercino, an old Crome, and one of the "Lady of Shalott" by Arthur Hughes.

Passing upstairs we came to the Poet's study, still used as such by his son. Here, at the window, looking upon the smaller lawns to the wood, and Lady Audrey's garden toward the Black Horse Copse, is the table where he wrote many of his later works. Here were written the plays into which, at an age when most men would have sunk into more restful paths of literature, Tennyson threw



SHED AT ROUNDHURST

This old shed, now gone, lay at the foot of Black-down, near the old Roundhurst farm built by Inigo Jones or by one of his disciples. I went over from Witley several times to paint it.

A long climb back up the winding drive, we always found it, to the friendly greeting and tea that awaited us at Aldworth.

himself with an enthusiasm that carried all before it, seeming to gain fresh energy with advancing years. What labour new to his previous experience the writing of "Queen Mary," "Becket," "Harold,"—to mention the greatest of his dramatic work,—entailed upon him, only those who have essayed historical drama for practical stage purposes can understand.

"Queen Mary," the first of the "historical trilogy"—as Tennyson called these three plays—was published in 1875, when its author was sixty-six. It was written during that year and the year before. The first list of works which he read before undertaking it number thirteen !

Yet the preparation he made for the subject was trifling in point of work compared to the care and art required to give the tragedy its true meaning in dramatic form.

The play was produced at the Lyceum Theatre by Irving in 1876, and later had a long run in Australia, at the Melbourne Theatre Royal. Tennyson himself considered the work—so far as character-drawing went—the most successful of his plays. He presented a copy of it, specially bound in red morocco, to the Allinghams as a wedding gift, with an inscription in his own hand.

“Harold” followed, apostrophised thus by Browning:—

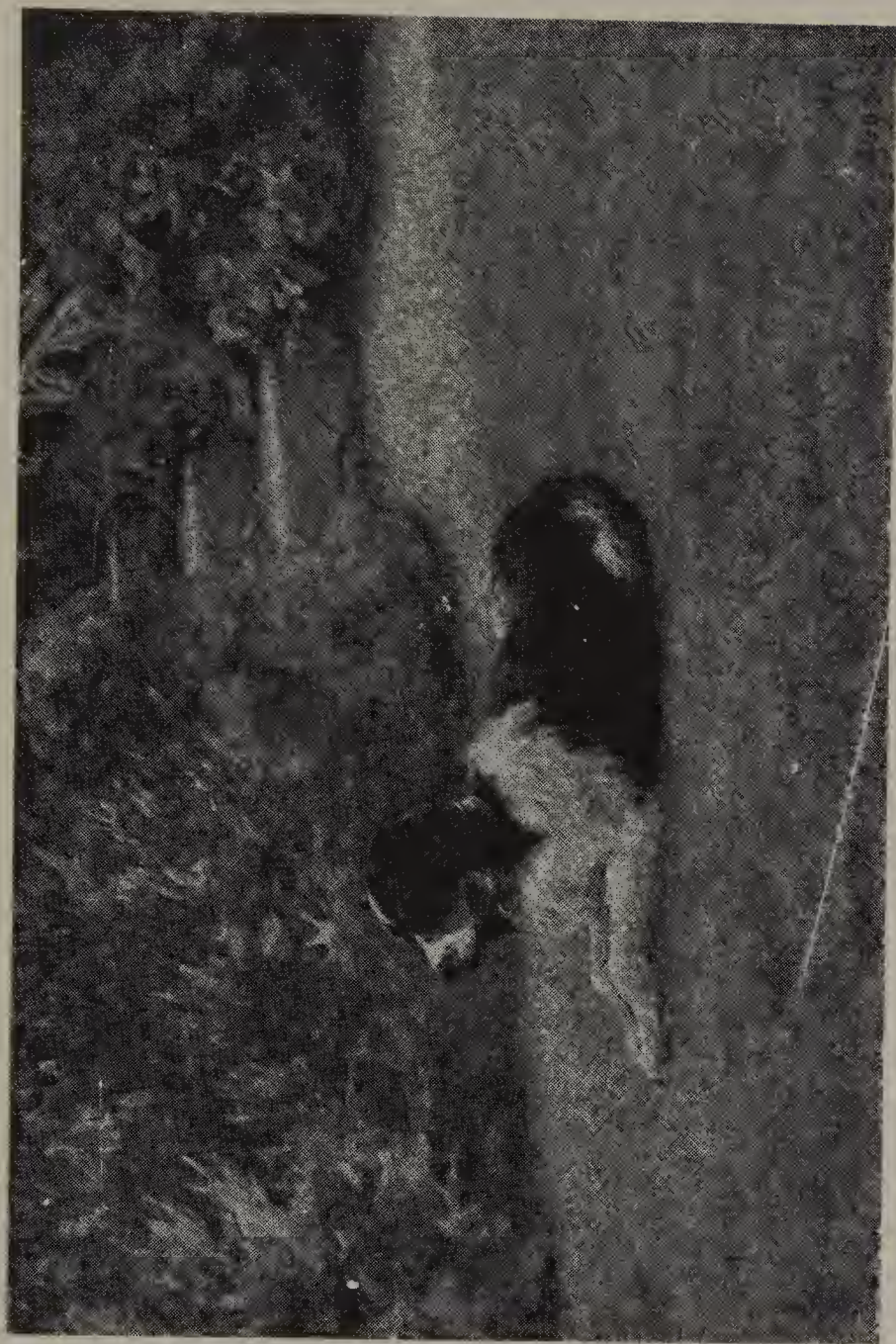
“What a fine new ray of light you are entwining with your many-coloured wreath.”

“Becket” was written three years later and published in 1884, and was produced and was made a great success by Irving in 1891.

And so the work went on in this quiet room, neither the burden of years, nor great social responsibilities, nor increasing shortness of sight and other infirmities, arresting the steady stream of creative power, which was preserved, indeed, to the very last.

It was in his eighty-first year, 1890, when journeying from Aldworth to Farringford, that one of the most perfect of his poems, a work likely to live as long as “Maud” itself, was written: “Crossing the Bar.”

This study at Aldworth contains many objects of interest. The latest portrait of the Poet done by Watts in crayon. The earliest sketch of him, at twenty-three years old, by Mrs. Weld. One, too, of Arthur Hallam. The print of the picture of a huge basaltic column discovered by the American explorer Dr. Kane in the Arctic regions and christened on the spot “Tennyson’s Monument.”



OLD DON

It was when we were spending the summer of 1880 at Haslemere that I made the sketch of the favourite old setter. The day after my last visit to paint him, the old dog died, and Tennyson wrote his name under the little drawing.

The original picture is in the ante-room at Farringford. And the wreath of laurel leaves laid on the Poet's tomb by the Queen with its simple inscription "V.R."

We are nearing the end. But before we take leave of Aldworth we must touch upon the daily life there.

We have alluded to Tennyson's tenderness to all animals. He was a great dog-lover, and the favourite setter "Dear old Don," whose portrait is given by Mrs. Allingham, was a constant companion in his walks over Blackdown.

The dog was given to the Poet by his son Lionel in 1877. A characteristic story is told of his advent. "It suddenly struck my father," Lord Tennyson writes, "at midnight that the new dog might feel hungry and lonely, so he went downstairs and stole a chicken for the dog. Great was the discomfiture in the kitchen next morning as to what had become of the chicken."

With "Don" at his heels and with one of his sons or a friend as companion, the Poet would still "tramp over hill and dale, not caring if the weather were fair or foul."

As he grew older his habits became more fixed and regular. He breakfasted at 8, lunched at 2,

dined at 7. He “worked chiefly in the morning over his pipe or in the evening after his pint of port, also over his pipe.”

To this regularity and method, together with his open-air life, Tennyson doubtless chiefly owed the strength of frame and of limb which he kept until the age of eighty-three.

William Allingham in a note on Aldworth in his private diary says that the Poet tells him how he climbed a mountain 7000 feet high when he was 67.

As the years passed the walks gradually grew shorter, and he spent more of his time in the arbours he had built in his garden,—the “sunset arbour” facing Blackdown with Hindhead in the distance, and “the eastern arbour,” looking over the Weald of Sussex. In these arbours he sat according to the direction of the wind. But one walk he kept up to the last, down the lane toward Haslemere—“Tennyson’s Lane,” already described—to a gate three-quarters of a mile from the house, known as the “Sussex” gate because at this point the two counties, Surrey and Sussex, meet.

To this gate the Poet came daily in that latest time of all, striking the gate-posts with his stick as he turned on his heel to go back.

Here there was in fullest measure the silence and peace that he loved to have in his walks. But not even at the last did he live apart from his friends while he had the strength to see them. As late as 1890, when he was eighty-one, Lady Tennyson writes :—

“He has been entertaining large five o’clock tea-parties for the last three or four weeks, almost daily, and has often been able to read to them”—though she adds at the end, “he is beginning to be weary of the many people.”

The time came when he began to be weary even in his walks. A friend writes of one: “Before he went up the slope he seemed exhausted, and sat down to rest on a melon-frame, and asked me to sit by him. It was the first sign I had noticed of failing strength, and gave me a sudden pang.” Yet his strength was marvellous. He was eighty-three then, and had walked three miles!

In May of that year Mrs. Allingham made a sad note in her diary :—

“Drove out with Lord Tennyson to Alum Bay. It was a beautiful day, bright sunshine and fresh breezes on the Down, but the Poet sat weary and depressed in his corner of the carriage, and when I remarked on the lark’s gay song, he only said,

‘I cannot hear it, I am going downhill.’ I went back to town with a sad feeling of foreboding.”

In June he returned to Aldworth from Farringford, which he was never to see again. His son writes of that time :—

“My father at first took his regular walks of a mile out and a mile in over Blackdown, but the walks dwindled down, and he sat more and more in his summer-houses.”

In August Mrs. Allingham notes in her diary : “‘Aug. 6th at Aldworth, Tennyson’s birthday ; Frederic Harrison, Dr. Weldon, and the Stewart Hodgsons there.’ Lord T. seemed rather better, I thought, and pleased to see the old friends and neighbours who had come up to greet him. On the 10th I took my younger children to Aldworth and Mr. Hallam Tennyson very kindly let them hear ‘The Charge of the Light Brigade,’ read by his father some time before into the phonograph. We saw him for a moment only in the hall ; he looked at a rush whip that my little boy had made ; but he was evidently tired, and we quickly took our leave.

“‘On the 20th met Mr. Rawnsley and Lewis Morris at Lord Tennyson’s.’ We sat in the garden, I remember, but he felt chilly and depressed, and let me wrap him in his large Spanish cloak.”



TENNYSON'S WOODS AT BLACKDOWN

I made this drawing in 1902, I think, looking southwards from Tennyson's road to his woods over Fox's Holes. The old road goes all the way through his property, skirting the garden in a deep cutting called Packhorse Lane.

It was in August he wrote of himself to a friend :
“I have entered my eighty-fourth year. I have entirely lost, as far as reading is concerned, the use of my right eye ; and I fear that the left is going in the same way.”

In September he begged his old friend Jowett, Master of Balliol, “not to consult with him or argue with him, as was his wont, on points of philosophy and religious doubt.” Later in the same month he finished his last poem “Whirl, and follow the Sun.”

The end was very near. “On Sept. 21st,” Mrs. Allingham writes, “I went to stay with Mrs. Mangles, a very old friend and neighbour of the Tennysons, and on the 29th I walked up to Aldworth, anxious to hear how he was. I had a little talk with Lady Tennyson on her sofa in the drawing-room, when she was evidently striving to take a hopeful view, and spoke of their trying some new form of diet recommended by Sir Andrew Clark. Mr. Hallam Tennyson came in and said, ‘Come up and see him.’ The Poet was sitting listlessly on the sofa in his study, too tired to read or even to raise his head to look out at the great view of the Weald. He greeted me kindly, as ever, and asked after my children, and I murmured

something, I suppose, about hoping that he would be better soon. In a minute or two he said, 'Are we not both a little hypocritical?' I took my leave with a very heavy heart.

"The next day I returned to town and soon afterwards had a disquieting letter from Mrs. Mangles. 'I feel sure you will be deeply grieved to hear of dear Lord Tennyson's serious illness. . . . I do trust he may rally, he has such a good constitution. . . . I feel so sad about Lord Tennyson I can think of nothing else.'"

On the 29th, the day Mrs. Allingham saw him for the last time, Sir Andrew Clark was telegraphed for. That morning Tennyson drove into Haslemere with his son, and pointing out his old accustomed haunts said: "I shall never walk there again."

Yet, two days later, though now suffering much, he asked for an article to be read to him on the "Colonisation of Uganda."

His mind was clear to the last. "Death?" he asked his doctor suddenly; and when assent was given, said quietly, "That's well."

The end came at night, and he lay "a figure of breathing marble" in the room overlooking the great Weald,—the landscape that he loved,—the moonlight pouring through the window.

Sunset and evening star
And one clear call for me.

Most peacefully the end came. In his hand was the work of the author he most loved, Shakespeare. His last words were a blessing upon his wife and noble son.

A mournful letter came to Mrs. Allingham from Mrs. Mangles after all was over, in which she says : "What a national loss, and to all those personal friends who have enjoyed the privilege and happiness of his friendship the loss is a truly great one ; to quote his own beautiful lines : 'The passing of the sweetest soul that ever looked with human eyes.' I can write no more, I feel so depressed and miserable."

He was buried in Westminster Abbey, the coffin covered with a Union Jack at the request of the Prince of Wales as an emblem of national feeling. The funeral service, his son writes, "was simple and majestic, and the tributes of sympathy which we received from many countries and from all creeds and classes were not only remarkable for their universality but for their depth of feeling."

He was placed next to Robert Browning. "And for weeks after the funeral multitudes passed by the new-made grave in a never-ceasing procession."

All this was as it should be. The death of

Alfred Tennyson, the Poet, was a loss to the nation, and the nation mourned.

Yet, if he could have seen all, we fancy that what would have touched him most was the funeral procession as it left his Sussex home.

“We placed *Cymbeline* with him,” writes his son, in his striking description, “and a laurel wreath from Virgil’s tomb and wreaths of roses, the flower which he loved above all flowers, and some of the Alexandrian laurel, the poet’s laurel. On the evening of the 11th the coffin was set upon a waggonette, made beautiful with stag’s-horn moss and the scarlet lobelia cardinalis, and draped with the pall woven by working men and women of the North and embroidered by the cottagers of Keswick, and then we covered him with the wreaths and crosses sent from all parts of Great Britain. The coachman, who had been for more than thirty years my father’s faithful servant, led the horse.

“Ourselves, the villagers, and the school children followed over the moor ; through our lane toward a glorious sunset, and later through Haslemere under brilliant starlight.”

Thus he passed from his latest home on earth.

